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to bolster cooperation
in legal sector**

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PM, Chinese ambassador discuss political, parliamentary exchange

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong on Thursday, underscoring the value of people-to-people contacts, as well as exchanges between the political parties and parliaments of both countries. During the meeting, the ambassador handed over a letter from President Xi Jinping, conveying appreciation for the Prime Minister's letter on the occasion of the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, a PM's Office news release said.

The prime minister also highlighted the positive trajectory of the bilateral relationship, while matters related to bilateral cooperation and regional issues of mutual interest were also discussed.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the relevant authorities to adopt an effective and comprehensive strategy aimed at ensuring the participation of world-class investors in the privatization of power distribution companies (DISCOs).

Chairing a review meeting on the privatization of DISCOs and institutional restructuring of the Privatization Commission, the prime minister instructed to complete the ongoing institutional reforms and restructuring of the Privatization Commission within one month. He expressed satisfaction over the successful roadshows held both domestically and internationally to attract investor participation in the privatization process.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of People's Republic of China to Pakistan H.E Jiang Zaidong calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Somalia's high-level defence delegation calls on COAS Syed Asim Munir

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: A high-level delegation from the Federal Republic of Somalia, led by Defence Minister Ambassador Ahmed Moallim Fiqi, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) here on Thursday at General Headquarters (GHQ).

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics, and measures to further enhance bilateral defence and security cooperation were discussed. Both sides underscored the importance of deepening military-to-military ties and capacity building initiatives to counter common security challenges, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's steadfast support and the professional role played by the Pakistan Armed Forces in promoting regional peace and stability. The Field Marshal reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to supporting Somalia in strengthening its security apparatus and fostering enduring peace in the region.

US to use military, economic, diplomatic tools to end Iran war: Vance

MAHPARA ZAMAN



WASHINGTON: The US will use military, economic and diplomatic tools to bring the Iran conflict to a resolution, Vice President JD Vance said in an interview with Fox News on Wednesday.

Asked about the setbacks in negotiations with Iran, Vance claimed two factors: "Number one, the Iranians are extraordinarily difficult people. Number two, they have a fractured system."

"There are people within their system that want the war to be over, and there are also people in their system that are crazy radicals who want the war to continue," he said. "Our job is to navigate through that and get the best outcome for the American people and for the President of the United States as well." Vance expressed hope for a settlement of the conflict, but said "it's going to be messy and it's gonna take some time to get there—but we'll land," adding that the oil prices will "come down and stay down." "Iran will never have a nuclear weapon, and the United States will be in a stronger position," he said. "But we're going to use all the tools that we have—military, economic, diplomatic—to make sure we bring this thing to the right resolution," Vance said. His remarks come amid tensions around the Strait of Hormuz following recent military confrontations between the US and Iran. US President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he would rather reach a deal with Iran than resort to military action while warning.

Security forces kill 12 terrorists in Balochistan's Mastung, Washuk IBOs: ISPR

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted two intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Balochistan's Mastung and Washuk districts, killing 12 terrorists in total, the military's media wing said on Thursday.

In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the "high-tempo" operations were carried out as part of the 'Radul Fitna' counterterrorism campaign against Fitna-al-Hindustan in Balochistan.

Balochistan-based terrorist groups have been designated as Fitna-al-Hindustan to highlight India's alleged role in terrorism and destabilisation across Pakistan.

The ISPR said that on August 5, "[The] movement of six terrorists was picked up by the security forces in Washuk District of Balochistan. Own troops effectively engaged these terrorists. As a result of precise and skilful engagement, all six terrorists belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna-al-Hindustan were sent to hell."

The military's media wing further said that during an operation in the Mastung district earlier today.

DPM Dar pays respects, offers prayer at Masjid-e-Nabawi

PEAK POINT

MADINA MUNAWARA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday arrived in Madina Munawara, where he paid his respects at Masjid-e-Nabawi (PBUH) and offered prayers. During his visit, the deputy prime minister prayed for the peace, progress, and prosperity of Pakistan and the well-being of the Muslim Ummah. He also visited Jabal Uhud, where he paid his respects at the resting place of Hazrat Ameer Hamza (RA) and offered prayers for all martyrs of the Battle of Uhud.

FO slams India's remarks on AJK polls, says it has no 'standing or moral authority' to comment on process

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) said on Thursday that India had "neither the standing nor the moral authority" to comment on the elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), which are being held in phases amid security concerns and unrest in the region.

FO spokesperson Tahir Andrabi made the remarks while addressing a weekly press briefing, where he was asked about the Indian External Affairs Ministry's (MEA) "reaction" to the ongoing polls. While the question did not elaborate further, the Indian Ministry had termed the polls a "farce" on Tuesday, saying that such "hollow exercises" could not hide the reality. "Pakistan categorically rejects the baseless and politically motivated remarks of the Indian MEA regarding the ongoing legisla-

tive elections in the AJK," were being conducted in a peaceful, transparent and



orderly manner" in accordance with the constitutional and legal framework governing the region. He added that the ongoing elections reflected "democratic aspirations and political will of the people of AJK". Andrabi maintained that India, in view of its continued denial of fundamental political rights and democratic freedom in occupied Kashmir, "has neither the standing nor the moral authority to comment on the demo-

cratic process in AJK".

He added that misinformation and propaganda could not change the status of occupied Kashmir, which remained a disputed territory.

"Its final disposition is to be determined in accordance with relevant UNSC resolutions as well as the freely expressed will of the Kashmiri people and through a UN-administered plebiscite," he said.

He also held that India's "attempt to invoke misleading casualty figures" cannot obscure its own actions in occupied Kashmir. Andrabi said such statements were an attempt to deflect international attention away from India's "continued violation of international human rights and humanitarian law and its persistent failure to fulfil international obligations". At this, he called on the neighbouring India to reverse its illegal actions of August 5, 2019.

Imran's sons express concerns about father's health in fresh interview with CNN



PEAK POINT

LONDON: The sons of ex-prime minister Imran Khan, Kasim and Sulaiman, have reiterated concerns about their incarcerated father's health in a fresh interview with CNN published on Thursday.

Their interview comes as the PTI marked three years since Imran was imprisoned on Aug 5, 2023 for concealing details of Toshakhana gifts. After his eye ailment came to light in January, the PTI founder's family and party leaders have repeatedly voiced concerns over a lack of access to him.

In the CNN interview, Kasim and Sulaiman said they had "no updates because his [Imran's] family, doctors [and] lawyers haven't been allowed to see him for seven months".



SPORTS



England recall Dan Lawrence from two years of Test exile to face Pakistan



PEAK POINT

ENGLAND: England have recalled Dan Lawrence from two years of Test exile to face Pakistan, with the batsman pencilled in to fill the middle-order vacancy created by the retirement of captain Ben Stokes.

National selector Marcus North, announcing a 16-man squad for the first two matches of the three-Test series on Thursday, confirmed Lawrence would bat at number six. Jordan Cox, who replaces the injured Jacob Bethell, will bat at number three.

Joe Root leads the side after being appointed for a second stint,

with the first Test starting at Headingley on August 19.

Lawrence has been in the international wilderness since he made his 14th Test appearance in September 2024, playing out of position as an opener against Sri Lanka.

The Surrey batter, 29, has been in impressive form in the County Championship this season, averaging more than 65, with five centuries.

Cox, 25, made his debut against New Zealand in the second Test at the Oval in June, when he replaced Stokes, who was omitted after he broke a team curfew.

Fast bowler Brydon Carse is included after missing the 2-1 series loss to New Zealand because of an injury to his right hand.

Marcus Trescothick will be the hosts' interim head coach before former New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming replaces compatriot Brendon McCullum as England's red-ball supremo.

Former England vice-captain Ollie Pope has also been recalled, having been discarded after a run of low scores during England's 4-1 Ashes series loss in Australia.

Off-spinner Shoaib Bashir has been retained, although it remains

to be seen if England will deploy a specialist slow bowler in Leeds.

England have lost seven of their past nine Tests and are without a series win since December 2024.

"We have selected a squad for the first two Tests that balances rising talent with the experience needed against a quality Pakistan team," said former Australia batter North.

"Dan Lawrence returns following an exceptional season so far with Surrey, and we believe he has the right level of experience, maturity and skill to complement our middle order," he added.

Women's Asia Cup will start in Dubai from August 28: ACC



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has confirmed the dates for the Women's T20 Asia Cup 2026 which will be held in Dubai from August 28.

The eight-team tournament will begin with a Group A encounter between Hong Kong China and Thailand. The high-profile India vs Pakistan fixture in Group A will be on September 5.

All matches in the tournament will be played under lights, with the final on September 13. The matches will be played at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium with a start time of 6.30pm local.

In Group B, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh face off on September 6. Indonesia and hosts UAE are the other two teams in Group B.

The group stage will feature each team playing against the other once, with the top two teams qualifying into the semi-finals on September 10 (A1 vs B2) and 11 (A2 vs B1).

This is the sixth edition of the Women's Asia Cup in the T20 format. Sri Lanka are defending champions, while Bangladesh won in 2018. India lead the pack with three wins in 2012, 2016 and 2022.

PFF hosts luncheon in honour of South Korea hockey team, promotes Inter-Sport Cooperation



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) hosted a luncheon on Wednesday in honour of the South Korea national hockey team as a gesture of goodwill and to promote international sporting cooperation during the team's ongoing tour of Pakistan. The South Korean side is currently visiting the country to participate in an FIH-sanctioned international test series

organised by the PFF's initiative, Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF). The luncheon was arranged as a symbol of Pakistan's traditional hospitality and to strengthen ties between the two sports federations. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Secretary for Inter-Provincial Coordination and President Pakistan Hockey Federation, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, praised the

ple and continue the tradition of excellent hospitality," he said.

Wani also recalled a notable historical connection between Pakistan's hockey success and world football, noting that Pakistan's triumph at the 1978 Hockey World Cup in Buenos Aires inspired Argentina football manager César Luis Menotti to adopt an attacking, possession-based style of play. Argentina went on to win its first FIFA World Cup later that same year. PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani extended a warm welcome to the South Korean team and wished them a successful tour of Pakistan.

Pakistan edge Portugal 2-1 to keep world title dream alive in Lisbon



PCB imposes two-year ban and PKR one million fine on Hamza Nazar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has imposed a two-year ban on domestic cricketer Hamza Nazar for participating in all domestic and international cricket activities. He has also been fined PKR one million.

The disciplinary action follows an inquiry into information provided by Hamza Nazar while applying for a visa through the PCB. The inquiry found that he had failed to disclose complete and accurate information, provided misleading information and withheld material facts during the application process. The PCB constituted a three-member inquiry committee. The committee provided Hamza Nazar with an opportunity to present his position and respond to the matters under consideration.

After hearing his explanation, reviewing the available information and taking all

relevant circumstances into account, the committee submitted its findings and recommendations to the PCB.

Following a detailed review of the committee's findings, the PCB decided to suspend Hamza Nazar from

non-disclosure and the submission of misleading information extremely seriously. Such conduct is inconsistent with the standards of honesty, professionalism and responsibility expected from individuals associated with



all forms of domestic and international cricket for a period of two years and impose a fine of PKR one million.

The PCB takes matters involving misrepresentation,

Pakistan cricket. The PCB will not allow any individual to tarnish the reputation of the Board, Pakistan cricket or the millions of supporters who follow and cherish the game.

Bodies of Nirmal Purja, 4 other climbers airlifted to Skardu after Broad Peak avalanche





Court victory, Government promises, still no solution: PMDC faces questions over doctors' future

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: A major controversy has erupted between Foreign Medical Graduates and the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), as thousands of doctors claim that their careers are being blocked because of new policies introduced after they had already started or completed their medical education. In a strong statement during a press conference at the National Press Club, Dr Asif Afridi, Secretary General of Pakistan International Human Rights Movement UN Geneva and spokesperson for Foreign Medical Graduates, said the issue has become a serious human rights concern. He warned that Pakistan's image could be affected if the future of thousands of young doctors remains uncertain. Dr Asif Afridi said these students are Pakistani citizens who studied abroad and returned with the intention of serving people in Pakistan. He questioned why medical graduates were being pushed away instead of being supported. He said medical professionals should not be judged because of political problems

between countries. "The priority should be Pakistan and humanity. Medical service has no borders," Dr Asif Afridi said while demanding that the authorities resolve the issue instead of creating more difficulties for young doctors. The dispute involves around 1200 graduated doctors and more than 4000 medical students who studied in foreign universities, including institutions in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and China. The graduates claim that their future has been affected by PMDC notifications issued on 8 September 2025 and 31 July 2026. According to Foreign Medical Graduates, many students joined these universities years before the new rules were announced. They say they selected institutions that were listed and accepted according to the information available from PMDC at that time. Dr Asif Afridi and other FMG representatives argue that students who enrolled before the new policy should not be punished because of later changes. They say a new law or policy should apply to future admissions, not students who

had already spent years studying abroad. The main demand of the graduates is simple: they want permission to appear in the National Registration Examination (NRE) and complete the registration process according to previous rules. The graduates say they are not afraid of examinations. They want a chance to prove their medical ability. Dr Waqas Akbar, President of Foreign Medical Graduates Afghanistan, said students are not avoiding the NRE exam and only want permission to participate. The controversy became stronger after PMDC introduced requirements that affected some foreign medical graduates. According to FMG representatives, the policy stopped some graduates from appearing in NRE and receiving Provisional Registration Medical Practice (PRMP). The graduates say many of them had already completed their education before the notification. They claim they enrolled in 2016, 2017 and 2018 when their universities were available on PMDC information lists and they received necessary permissions before going abroad. The

matter reached the Peshawar High Court, where affected graduates challenged the policy. Dr Waqas Akbar said the court ruled that students who were already enrolled or graduated before the notification should not be affected by the new policy. Advocate Abdul Rahim Wazir also raised legal questions about the PMDC notifications. He said the main issue was whether an administrative order could be applied backward to students who had already started their education years earlier. He said students spent millions of rupees on their medical education and returned to Pakistan expecting registration according to existing rules. Advocate Abdul Rahim said the issue was not only about students but about thousands of families. According to him, around 5000 families are connected with these doctors and students, and their careers and dreams are now uncertain. Dr Asif Afridi said the matter has also been raised internationally. He stated that FMGs may approach international human rights organisations, including

Amnesty International and UN Human Rights platforms, if the issue remains unresolved. The FMGs also rejected claims that all foreign universities were poor quality institutions. They questioned why universities were allowed earlier if students were later blamed for studying there. Dr Adnan, former President of AFMG, questioned why students were allowed to join universities if those institutions were already considered unacceptable. He asked why such universities were placed on approved lists in the first place. The graduates also highlighted examples of doctors who studied from similar institutions and are now working as professors in Pakistan. They mentioned doctors such as Dr Jan Zeb, Assistant Professor at HMC Pediatrics, and Dr Zahid, Associate Professor in Neurosurgery at LRH, as examples of foreign educated doctors serving in Pakistan. FMG representatives also questioned why some graduates from the same universities received opportunities while others faced restrictions. Dr Waqas gave an example of class-

mates who studied together, graduated together and applied together, but some received PRMP while others did not. The graduates further argued that some foreign educated doctors have passed international examinations, including pathways connected with global medical organisations, and questioned why they are not allowed to appear in Pakistan's own licensing examination. The FMGs have demanded withdrawal of the disputed notifications, protection for students who enrolled before the policy change, permission to sit in NRE and completion of registration without discrimination. The group has appealed to the President of Pakistan, Prime Minister, Federal Health Ministry, Parliament, PMDC, judiciary and human rights organisations to intervene and find a permanent solution according to law. The dispute now remains a major challenge for thousands of young medical professionals who say they only want one opportunity: the right to appear in the examination and prove themselves.

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AJK goes to PML-N

The PML-N is poised to form its government in AJK as the state awaits the third and final leg of polling on August 10. Following the first two phases of the election, the PPP stands as the runner-up with 10 seats in the 53-member legislature. The PML-N secured 24 seats based on a relentless pro-development campaign, though its victory was marred by claims that state machinery and influence were misused. The polls, however, saw the weakest turnout in the state's history. This dip came on the heels of an ongoing protest by the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), which is demanding an end to elite governance culture, fundamental rights for citizens, and primarily, the abolition of the 12 seats reserved for Kashmiri refugees inside Pakistan. The second phase of the polls across the nine constituencies of Muzaffargarh division witnessed a dismal turnout among the electorate. Mirroring the lethargy that marred the polling in Mirpur division in the first phase, voters preferred to stay away on account of law and order concerns, as well as a boycott called by the JAAC and PTI. The AJK Election Commission, law enforcement agencies and polling staff deserve credit for their commitment, which ensured that polling took place without any major incident.

The growth-jobs paradox

Ishtiaq Rehman Khan
T HE 2024 upheaval that toppled Sheikh Hasina's government in Bangladesh, alongside the youth-led protests over joblessness in India, point to a shared crisis across South Asia: strong economic growth has not translated into enough good jobs for a workforce that is more educated than ever before. As access to schooling and universities has expanded, so have people's employment expectations — expectations that a narrow job market has failed to meet, sparking widespread anger. In India, nearly 40 per cent of graduates under 25 can't find work; youth joblessness is near 29pc. Roughly four in five Indian workers depend on informal, insecure employment.

Economic theory holds that growth happens as workers shift from low-output farming to more productive factory and service jobs, and that this shift should expand labour demand and shrink joblessness. But India, Bangladesh and Pakistan contradict that story. India and Bangladesh have sustained 6-7pc annual growth for over three decades; Pakistan has managed only 3-4pc. Yet, none of the three has generated sufficient formal, productive work. Growth rate alone doesn't explain the shortfall.

Data from the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies show Indian employment expanding just 1.6pc a year from 2000 to

2012, then flat-lining from 2012 to 2019 even as GDP kept climbing. The type of growth a country experiences, not merely its speed, appears to shape how many jobs it creates. India's economic transformation, while the point vividly. Agriculture accounted for 35pc of GDP in 1990, absorbing 62pc of the workforce; by 2025, its GDP share had dropped to 16pc, yet it still employed about 42pc of workers. Agricultural productivity relative to the rest of the economy fell from 0.54 to 0.40 over this period, a sign of chronic underemployment and surplus labour stuck on the farm. Meanwhile, economy-wide productivity nearly quadrupled, ie, rising incomes came mostly from efficiency gains in industry and modern services, not new job creation. Workers haven't left agriculture at the rate that genuine structural change requires. The outcome is reflected in living standards: CLSA data put average urban household income at around \$20,000, and just \$3,600 in rural areas.

Part of the problem is that new, productivity-boosting technologies tend to displace low-skilled workers faster than emerging industries can absorb them. For instance, India's IT sector has become a world-class tech hub, pulling in over \$13 billion in venture capital each year, spawning countless start-ups and unicorns, and generating some \$300bn in annual revenue. Yet, it employs only around six million people, barely 1pc of the national workforce.

Rapid GDP growth by itself cannot ensure enough jobs or social stability.

The roughly 2,000 global capability centres set up by MNCs add only about 2m jobs. Against this, India's labour force grows by some 12m young people annually, including about 1m engineering graduates, only half of whom are considered employable in their field. Over the past decade, the IT sector has added only about 1m jobs. India may handle over 30pc of global outsourced business-process work, but this tech-driven growth has been skill-intensive, not job-intensive.

As Indian industry and services keep climbing the value chain, the need for unskilled and semi-skilled labour is set to shrink further, a trend that AI, robotics, and automation may speed up, leaving policymakers with a dilemma: how to keep India competitive in technology while generating enough jobs for millions of young people without advanced skills. As services focus on finance, IT, e-commerce, and other knowledge-heavy fields, older labour-intensive jobs in retail and community and personal services contract. Agriculture, the fallback employer for surplus labour, offers no real cure. Modernising it would raise productivity and rural incomes, but reform efforts run into political opposition — the Modi government's three farm laws sparked mass protests and had to be repealed.

Courtesy Dawn

Afghan policy-resistance and realism

Inam Ul Haque

Lt Gen Sami Sadat of the former Afghan National Army (ANA) has recently launched an organised resistance against the Taliban rule from the Afghanistan United Front (AUF) platform, announcing armed uprising by former soldiers of ANA and others, to overthrow the recalcitrant IEA regime and 'reclaim' Afghanistan. In his August 2026 address from an undisclosed location, Sadat, wearing ANA uniform, with the tricolour former flag of Afghan Republic in the background, officially launched 'Operation Muharib', declaring end of dialogue and attempted negotiations with the IEA. He announced phased resistance, claiming active combat operations first along Kandahar-Spin Boldak highway (IEA's political hub), while simultaneously targeting the Taliban in the northeast. Reassuring Afghanistan's neighbours, he sought material assistance without asking for manpower help, to fight IEA, TTP, IS-K, Al-Qaeda, et al.

In a related development, in northeastern Badakhshan province, on July 28, 2026, Zabihullah Amri, heading the local Dept of Information and Culture, was assassinated. Amri was well connected and reportedly the nephew of Amanuddin Mansour, IEA's governor of Helmand. The IS-K claimed responsibility. And on July 17, a newer group, Sipahiyan-e-Mihan (Soldiers of Homeland Front), led by Qayum Malang, a former ANA officer, briefly seized Yafat-e-Payeen District in Badakhshan. Two more groups, the National Resistance Front (NRF) and the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF), have also claimed attacks in the province.

Presently, the NRF headed by Ahmad Massoud (son of the slain anti-Soviet resistance leader Ahmad Shah Massoud) is operating from political headquarters in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The group has diplomatic presence in European capitals, called the Vienna Process.

Courtesy Tribune

Pakistan to launch China-Style law enforcement investigation centre



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to embark on a major transformation of its policing system, with Interior Minister Moin Naqvi announcing a series of reforms inspired by successful international law enforcement models, including the establishment of a China-style Law Enforcement Investigation Centre in Islamabad.

The announcement came during a meeting with Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs) who recently returned after completing specialized training courses in China and Türkiye. The officers described the overseas programmes

as an invaluable experience that significantly enhanced their professional capabilities and exposed them to modern policing practices, surveillance technologies, and contemporary approaches to maintaining law and order. Acknowledging the importance of international exposure, Naqvi declared that foreign training programmes would become a permanent component of the professional development of Pakistani police officers. He emphasized that the government was committed to equipping the country's law enforcement agencies with the skills and technologies required to address emerging security challenges. As part of the reform package, the Interior Minister announced the launch of a pilot project to establish a China-style Law Enforcement Investigation Centre in Islamabad.

The centre will integrate detention, investigation, and summary trial facilities under one roof, enabling the swift and efficient disposal of cases involving minor offences while

reducing procedural delays.

Naqvi said Pakistan would benefit from internationally proven policing models to make its law enforcement system more effective, responsive, and technology-driven. He stressed that the adoption of advanced surveillance systems and modern technologies would significantly expand monitoring capabilities and strengthen crime prevention efforts.

To further enhance public safety, the Interior Minister announced that state-of-the-art drones would be inducted into the Aviation Wing of the Ministry of Interior to improve surveillance and support law enforcement operations. The reform agenda also includes strengthening investigative capacity through the establishment of specialized investigation rooms at the National Police Academy. According to Naqvi, greater emphasis will be placed on specialized investigation training aligned with the evolving requirements of modern policing. He further announced that interrogation.

IT Minister chairs joint meeting of heads of IT training institutions

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Thursday chaired a joint meeting of heads of IT training institutions from across Pakistan to develop a coordinated strategy for equipping young people with globally competitive digital skills.

The meeting was held at the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication. IT secretaries from Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan joined virtually. Representatives of the Punjab Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), heads of provincial training institutions and senior ministry officials also attended.

Participants discussed a



roadmap to provide world-class IT training that meets the latest demands of the global technology industry. Addressing the meeting, Shaza Fatima directed all provincial institutions to immediately launch modern IT courses and internationally recognised training programmes.

She said the initiative would help Pakistani youth compete in the global job market and create more opportunities in freelancing and other technology-related fields. The minister said empowering young people remained the government's top priority.

CDWP clears seven development projects, refers Rs240.54bn schemes to ECNEC

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on Thursday approved seven development projects, including four schemes worth Rs12.437 billion, while recommending three major projects with a cumulative cost of Rs240.537 billion to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for final consideration.

The CDWP meeting, chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Professor Ahsan Iqbal, reviewed development initiatives in the higher education, information technology, and physical planning and housing sectors aimed at advancing the government's reform agenda under the URAAN Pakistan programme, a news release said.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Secretary Planning, Chief Economist, Vice Chancellor of PIDE, mem-

bers of the Planning Commission, federal secretaries, heads of provincial Planning and Development departments, and senior representatives of relevant ministries and provincial governments.

The forum approved four higher education projects with directions for cost rationalisation and improved governance.

The revised project, "Strengthening of the Women University of AJK, Bagh," costing Rs2.551 billion, received in-principle approval. Ahsan Iqbal constituted a committee comprising the Member Science and Technology, Member Infrastructure, and Chief Physical Planning and Housing to rationalise the project cost. He directed the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to prepare a comprehensive master plan and ensure that construction work is awarded only to pre-qualified top-tier firms. Stressing transparency and accountability, the minister said every rupee of taxpayers' money must be utilised efficiently under a robust oversight.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives and Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Ahsan Iqbal, chairs the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) meeting.

Mushaah Mullick offers again to mediate AJK crisis

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Mushaah Hussein Mullick on Thursday reaffirmed her support for the Kashmir cause, urged unity and peaceful dialogue in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and offered to mediate the ongoing crisis, saying internal stability in the region is essential to strengthening the broader struggle for the rights of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In a statement issued on Youm-e-Istehsal, Mullick paid tribute to the resilience of the Kashmiri people and described Azad Jammu and Kashmir as the peaceful base camp of the Kashmir freedom movement. She stressed that public grievances should be addressed through constitutional, institutional and non-political mechanisms, while peaceful dialogue should remain the primary means of resolving disputes.

She called for trusted and impartial voices committed to the Kashmir cause to help bridge the gap between the public and state institutions.

Pakistan and US agree to bolster cooperation in legal sector

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: United States Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker met Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar in Islamabad and discussed bilateral relations, matters of mutual interest, and ways to strengthen cooperation in the legal sector.

According to an official statement issued on Thursday, the two sides exchanged views on Pakistan-US relations and agreed to promote greater cooperation in the field of law. The meeting also covered a range of issues of shared interest.

The statement said the US Chargé d'Affaires appreciated Pakistan's positive role in addressing the Gulf conflict and also praised the leadership of



Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker further commended the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, according to the official statement.

During the meeting, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said Pakistan remains committed to promoting peace, stability, and diplomacy across the region.

Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar added that the country would continue to play

Maritime minister, Sindh governor agree on coordinated action against marine pollution

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and Sindh Governor Neel Hashmi agreed to launch coordinated efforts to combat marine pollution, protect coastal ecosystems and strengthen blue economy. The issue came under discussion during a meeting at the minister's office where the two leaders reviewed the worsening state of marine pollution along coastline and its implications for marine biodiversity, fisheries, coastal communities and critical infrastructure. The minister said marine pollution was no longer confined to environmental degradation but



had become a multidimensional challenge affecting livelihoods, economic activity and the health of people living in coastal areas. The minister said the Marine Pollution Control Board of the ministry was already implementing measures to curb pollution and proposed convening a meeting with the Sindh government and relevant provincial departments to prepare a coordinated response.

Digital Balochistan AI launchpad participants call on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of students participating in the five-day Digital Balochistan AI Launchpad Bootcamp called on Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House, Islamabad, today, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, Mr. Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, was also present on the occasion. Welcoming the students to Parliament House, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed his longstanding affinity with

Balochistan, recalling that he had first visited the province in 1994. He described Balochistan as an extremely important province of Pakistan and said that Reko Diq has the potential to transform the future of the country. He also stated that Balochistan has always remained his first priority. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the National Assembly has launched an internship programme under which training courses are being conducted for students from 21 universities across Pakistan. He said that the

National Assembly aims to increase the internship opportunities for students from Balochistan. While emphasizing the importance of reading, research and continuous learning, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that when he was first elected as a Member of the National Assembly in 2002, he did not have much knowledge of the Constitution, therefore, he regularly studied the Constitution of Pakistan and the Rules of Procedure & Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, which helped him develop a better

understanding of parliamentary affairs. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the National Assembly has allocated a quota for all provinces in employment opportunities, while special opportunities are also being provided to persons with disabilities. He added that efforts are being made to increase women's representation in employment at the National Assembly to 30 percent. He emphasized that providing equal opportunities to young people is essential for national development. During the

interaction, the students were briefed on the National Assembly's initiatives for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced digital technologies in parliamentary affairs. They were informed that the National Assembly of Pakistan has introduced the country's first AI-enabled parliamentary system, aimed at integrating modern digital technologies and AI into parliamentary processes. The students were apprised of the digitization of parliamentary business, including the electronic circulation and access-

sibility of agendas, bills, reports, and documents. They were also informed about the provision of digital tablets to Members of the National Assembly as part of the transition towards paperless parliamentary operations, resulting in reduced paper and printing requirements, greater administrative efficiency and easier access to parliamentary information. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq informed the students that the use of Artificial Intelligence is helping enhance efficiency in parliamentary research.