

News in Brief

India pushes FATF to grey-list Pakistan over Gandapur's Taliban remarks



ISLAMABAD: The Indian government has presented Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's recent remarks to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as part of its case against Pakistan, officials from the global watchdog said on Thursday.

According to the FATF officials, New Delhi has presented the statement as formal proof in support of its stance that Islamabad provides support to terrorist elements, Geo News reported.

The Indian submission specifically references Gandapur's recent comment in which he said: "We arrest the Taliban, but our own institutions get them released, claiming they are their people."

The remarks, which drew criticism at home, are now being used by India to request Pakistan's re-listing on the FATF's "increased monitoring" list, commonly known as the grey list.

Indian authorities have argued that this public admission by a provincial chief minister shows that Pakistan's institutions continue to aid and protect terrorist elements.

The FATF officials said India framed the statement as a formal "charge sheet" against Pakistan, particularly highlighting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a region gravely affected by terrorism and militancy.

Pakistan-US trade agreement boosts stock market



Investor sentiment remained buoyant on Thursday as the bourse rallied on the back of a landmark trade agreement between Pakistan and the United States, alongside continued optimism over macro-economic stability and policy continuity from the central bank.

"Positive sentiment on US trade deal is a diplomatic success, especially when people compare higher duties on Indian export," said independent investment and economic analyst AAH Soomro.

"The hope is that US-Pakistan partnership continues strengthening, leading to economic stability under IMF," he added.

The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index closed at 139,390.42 points, up 978.17 points, or 0.71%, from the previous close of 138,412.25.

The index climbed to an intraday high of 139,977.65, gaining 1,565.40 points, or 1.13%, while touching a low of 139,369.06, up 956.81 points, or 0.69%.

In a major diplomatic breakthrough, US President Donald Trump confirmed the finalisation of a trade agreement between the two countries. The development signals a boost in bilateral economic ties at a time when India continues to face high tariffs and geopolitical headwinds due to its energy ties with Russia.

According to the Ministry of Finance, the agreement was concluded during Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb's meeting with the US Secretary of Commerce and the US Trade Representative. Pakistan's Ambassador to the US Rizwan Saeed Sheikh and Commerce Secretary Jawad Paul were also present.

## PM reaffirms resolve to eliminate scourge of terrorism from Pakistan

"The state of Pakistan is determined to root out the scourge of terrorism and the world recognises our successful operations against terrorists," said PM Shehbaz.

The premier emphasised a multi-pronged strategy in the fight against terrorism, which includes ground operations, relevant legislation, effective public communication, and countering extremist ideologies.

"Pakistan has made full and effective use of important elements such as ground operations, relevant legislation, meaningful public communication and discouragement of extremist thinking," he added.

He called for enhanced coordination between federal and provincial governments to ensure the strict implementation of counter-terrorism recommendations.

"The role of the brave sons of the armed forces in this war against terrorism is commendable and laudable," he remarked.

He said: "The entire nation, including me, is proud of the officers and officials who laid down their lives for the country and their families who were imbued with the spirit of sacrifice."

"The entire Pakistani nation, the brave forces, law enforcement agencies, and intelligence agencies are united and focused in the war against terrorism," he added.

The prime minister said: "Pakistan's brave forces fought the terrorists vigorously in Operation



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to eradicating terrorism during a review meeting of the Steering Committee on Counter-Terrorism on Thursday.

Radd-ul-Fasaad and Zarb-e-Azb, and the world recognised Pakistan's victory in the recent historic Marka-e-Haq."

He acknowledged that the provincial governments, the Intelligence Bureau, the Ministry of Interior, the Counter-Terrorism Department, especially the Punjab Counter-Terrorism Department, had taken very effective steps in this war against terrorism.

"Pakistan is working on a comprehensive, effective and workable strategy to completely eliminate Fitna al-Hindustan and Fitna al-Khawarij and other such anti-social elements," he stressed.

He said: "With the joint strategy and cooperation of all the relevant institutions, effective operations were undertaken against

smuggling, which made it possible to prevent the menace."

"Prevention of smuggling has had a positive impact on the economy," he noted.

"Only a peaceful and strong state structure free from terrorism restores the confidence of investors at the international level," he said, adding: "The government has brought revolutionary changes such as digitisation of all systems and improvement in the tax system to restore the confidence of the investors at the international level."

He said: "Record increase in the Pakistan Stock Exchange and improvement in global ratings indicate the stability of Pakistan's economy, and this will restore the confidence of foreign investors." "The implementa-

tion of the repatriation programme for Afghan nationals residing illegally in Pakistan in accordance with international laws is continuing effectively," he observed.

Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Field Marshal Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir, National Security Adviser Lieutenant General Muhammad Asim Malik, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazir Tarar, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Division Ahmad Khan Cheema, Adviser to the Prime Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaullah, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Chief Secretaries of all provinces, Inspectors.

## Pakistan hails 'landmark' trade deal with US

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has thanked US President Donald Trump for his leadership in finalising a "historic" deal between Islamabad and Washington.

In a post on X, the prime minister termed the agreement "historic" and said it would help deepen economic ties and strengthen the broader partnership between the two countries. "This landmark deal will enhance our growing co-operation to expand the frontiers of our enduring partnership in days to come," he said.

The deal was concluded in Washington late last night after intensive talks between officials from both sides.

"We have just concluded a Deal with the Country of Pakistan, whereby Pakistan and the United States will work together on developing their massive Oil Reserves," Trump wrote on social media.

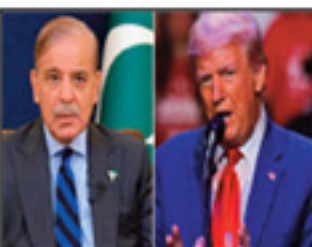
"Major diplomatic success"

Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani has described Pakistan's newly concluded trade deal with the United States as a major diplomatic success and a positive step for the country's economy.

In an exclusive interview with Geo News, Kayani said the agreement was the outcome of sustained diplomatic engagement in recent weeks. "This deal reflects the strength of our diplomacy," he said, adding that his government worked consistently to strengthen diplomatic outreach.

He confirmed that the agreement includes tariff reductions on Pakistani exports to the US — a move expected to give a significant boost to the country's trade.

"This is a welcome devel-



opment for our economy," Kayani added. "Broader partnership taking shape"

Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb told Geo News that Pakistan and the United States had agreed to move trade and investment hand in hand, following a key meeting in Washington.

Speaking after talks with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutting and Trade Representative Jameson Greer, Aurangzeb described the meeting as constructive and said the two sides finalised the trade agreement during the discussion.

"This deal reflects a broader economic and strategic partnership that's now taking shape," he said.

The minister thanked all those involved in the negotiations, saying the private sector had played a vital role and would continue to be supported, especially in helping to reduce the trade imbalance.

US total goods trade with Pakistan was an estimated \$7.3 billion in 2024, according to the website of the Office of the US Trade Representative, up from around \$6.9 billion in 2023. The US goods trade deficit with Pakistan was \$3 billion in 2024, a 5.2% increase over 2023.

Dar says it's a done deal. Meanwhile, DPM Dar broke the news in a late-night post on X, declaring: "Pakistan concludes deal with USA, Alhamdulillah." His announcement capped.

## Germany warns Israel against unilateral actions in Palestinian territories

Germany's Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl emphasised on Thursday that recognising a Palestinian state should follow negotiations aimed at achieving a two-state solution, amid rising tensions over "annexation threats" by some Israeli ministers.

Wadepuhl is heading off to Israel and the Palestinian territories for a fact-finding mission in response to growing concerns about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

His comments represent Germany's strongest warning to Israel to date, as Western nations, including Britain, Canada, and France, signal their intent to support Palestinian statehood at the upcoming United Nations General Assembly.

"Critics, however, contend that Germany's cautious approach is influenced by a historical sense of guilt regarding the Holocaust, and a prevailing pro-Israel bias in influential media circles, which may limit the West's effectiveness in applying pressure on Israel."

In his statement, Wadepuhl reiterated Germany's stance that a sustainable resolution to the Gaza war can only be achieved through a negotiated two-state solution — a Palestinian state co-existing in peace alongside Israel.

"In light of open annexation threats from parts of the Israeli government, a growing number of countries - including many in Europe - are now prepared to recognise a Palestinian state even without a prior negotiation process. The region and the Middle East peace process are therefore at crossroads," said Wadepuhl.

"That process must begin now. Should unilateral steps be taken, Germany too will be compelled to respond."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition includes two far-right parties that call for the outright conquest of Gaza and the re-establishment of Jewish settlements there. Two senior government ministers also voiced support on Thursday for annexing the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The death toll from almost two years of war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza surpassed 60,000 this week. A growing number of civilians are dying from starvation and malnutrition, Gaza health authorities say, with images of starving children shocking the world and intensifying criticism of Israel over its curbs on aid into the enclave.

Germany, together with the United States, has long remained one of Israel's staunchest allies and largest arms suppliers. German officials say their approach to Israel is governed by a special responsibility, known as the "Staatsraison", arising from the legacy of the Nazi Holocaust. They say they can achieve more through diplomatic back-channels than public statements. Pro-Israel German media The largest media group in Germany, Axel Springer, which owns its best-selling daily Bild as well as other publications like Welt and Politico, includes a specific pro-Israel commitment in its core corporate principles.

The clause commits Axel Springer and its employees to a pro-Israel editorial stance. Bild published a story on Thursday, for example, denouncing a "hunger campaign" against Israel and moves by Western countries to raise pressure on the country, which it said had prolonged the war in Gaza by emboldening Hamas to leave ceasefire talks. The paper praised Germany for not doing so.

Another Bild story on Thursday denounced a "campaign designed to morally destroy Israel," Chancellor.

## Top PTI leaders including Omar Ayub, Shibli Faraz sentenced to 10 years in May 9 cases

In its verdict, the special ATC sentenced 108 individuals of the total 185 accused, which also includes Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) chief MNA Sahibzada Hamid Raza, who has been handed 10 years imprisonment.

The court also acquitted former PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry, Zain Qureshi and Khayal Kastro.

In the second case registered at the Civil Lines Police Station, the anti-terrorism court sentenced 28 out of the 32 accused and acquitted four individuals.

A total of 107 people were named in the case, of which 32 were tried. Among those acquitted are Fawad Chaudhry,

Zain Qureshi and Khayal Kastro.

In another case related to the May 9 violence registered at Ghulam Muhammadabad Police Station, the court sentenced 60 individuals, while seven of the 67 accused were acquitted.

The court also handed down a three-year jail term to Junaid Afzal Sahi in the aforementioned case.

Reacting to the verdict, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan decried that a total of 45 years' sentence has been handed over to the party leaders in back-to-back judgements in three days.

"These decisions will destroy democracy," Gohar said while speak-

ing to the media.

"The judiciary is seen with hope, but the people have become disappointed with it. There is still time to save this system," the PTI chairman said.

"We want the system to work, democracy to be strong," added Gohar.

Today's verdict comes days after PTI leaders Dr Yasmin Rashid and Mian Mehmood ur Rasheed were awarded a 10-year sentence in May 9 case. The court also awarded sentences to former Punjab governor Omar Sarfraz Cheema, PTI leaders Senator Ejaz Chaudhry and Afzal Azeem Pahat in the same case.

## Ex-MP, six others cleared of deadly India bombing charges



MUMBAI: An Indian court on Thursday acquitted Hindu nationalist figure and former BJP lawmaker Sathvi Pragya Thakur, along with six others, of charges related to a 2008 bombing near a mosque in Malegaon, Maharashtra, that killed six people and injured over 100.

The accused had faced terrorism and criminal conspiracy charges over the blast, which was caused by a bomb planted on a motorcycle. The high-profile trial, involving allegations of right-wing extremism, stretched on for years before concluding with Thursday's verdict.

The prosecution claimed Thakur's motorcycle was used to carry the explosives used in the attack, and that she took part in a key planning meeting before it was staged.

However, Judge AK Lahoti ruled on Thursday that the prosecution failed to provide sufficient evidence against Thakur and the six others.

"Judgements cannot be based on morals and public perception," Lahoti said, according to Indian legal website Live Law.

Defence lawyer Ranjit Nair said the judge noted that the prosecution could not "present any proof against the accused".

Indian parliamentarian Asaduddin Owaisi called the verdict "disappointing", saying those killed

were "targeted for their religion".

"A deliberately shoddy investigation/prosecution is responsible for the acquittal," he said in a post on X.

Islam is a minority religion in Hindu-majority India, the world's most populous country.

During the trial, India's counter-terrorism unit said the 2008 bombing was orchestrated to incite communal tensions, local media reported.

Thakur, 55, spent nine years in jail before she was given bail in 2017.

She later won an election after being fielded by the BJP to run for a seat in the central city of Bhopal.

Indian election rules allow anyone to stand for office as long as they have not been convicted of a crime.

Thakur courted controversy when she called the radical Hindu assassin of Indian independence hero Mahatma Gandhi a "patriot" — earning her a rebuke from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

She also raised eyebrows for claiming that drinking cow urine had helped cure her cancer and extolling.

## Indian state refiners stop buying Russian oil: report

Indian state refiners have stopped buying Russian oil in the past week as discounts narrowed this month and US President Donald Trump warned countries not to purchase oil from Moscow, industry sources said.

India, the world's third-largest oil importer, is the biggest buyer of seaborne Russian crude, a vital revenue earner for Russia as it wages war in Ukraine for a fourth year.

The country's state refiners — Indian Oil Corp, Hindustan Petroleum Corp, Bharat Petroleum Corp and Mangalore Refinery Petrochemical Ltd — have not sought Russian crude in the past week or so, four sources familiar with the refiners' purchase plans told Reuters.

IOC, BPCL, HPCL, MRPL and the federal oil ministry did not immediately respond to Reuters'

requests for comment.

The four refiners regularly buy Russian oil on a delivered basis and have turned to spot markets for replacement supply — mostly Middle Eastern grades such as Abu Dhabi's Murban crude and West African oil, sources said.

Private refiners Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy, majority owned by Russian entities including oil major Rosneft, have annual deals with Moscow and are the biggest Russian oil buyers in India. On July 14, Trump threatened 100% tariffs on countries that buy Russian oil unless Moscow reaches a major peace deal with Ukraine.

Indian refiners are pulling back from Russian crude as discounts shrink to their lowest since 2022, when Western sanctions were first imposed on Moscow, due to lower

Russian exports and steady demand, sources said.

Refiners fear the latest EU curbs could complicate overseas trade including fund raising — even for buyers adhering to the price cap. India has reiterated its opposition to "unilateral sanctions".

Trump on Wednesday announced a 25% tariff on goods imported from India from August 1, but added that negotiations were ongoing. He also warned of potential penalties for purchase of Russian arms and oil.

On Monday Trump cut the deadline to impose secondary sanction on buyers of Russian exports to 10-12 days from the previous 50-day period, if Moscow does not agree a peace deal with Ukraine.

Russia is the top supplier to India, responsible for about 35% of India's overall supplies.

## Sindh ombudsman orders to remove KE CEO over workplace harassment

KARACHI: The Provincial Ombudsman for Sindh has directed the removal of K-Electric Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Moonis Alvi in a case pertaining to workplace harassment.

Justice (r) Shah Nawaz Tariq, who serves as the Provincial Ombudsman for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace, also imposed a fine of Rs2.5 million on Alvi. The fine

must be paid within one month. According to the ruling, the complainant was subjected to harassment and mental distress by the KE CEO. If Alvi fails to comply with the order, the ombudsman has

directed authorities to freeze his movable and immovable assets. His [Moonis Alvi] CNIC and passport may also be blocked if the fine is not paid, the ruling said.

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1st August, 2025

## Sugar politics

THE revelation by the auditor general of Pakistan that the sugar mill owners have stashed away a staggering Rs300bn in additional profits by heftily raising the retail prices of the commodity after the government granted them export permission is quite instructive. That the industry, notorious for wielding its enormous political clout to profiteer, manipulate policy and steal taxes, has pulled this off again is not just scandalous, it also exposes the deeper malaise of governance failure.

The state has yet again failed to regulate the markets and shield the consumers. The AGP's testimony before the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly underlines how the state often acts to protect the interests of the powerful business lobbies — especially when these interests align with those of the ruling political elite.

What makes the already murky business of sugar even murkier is the opacity around the actual ownership of the mills. It is widely known that a major share of the sugar industry is controlled by those who occupy top public offices and sit in parliament or are closely related to them. In certain cases, these interests are fronted by proxies to obscure the actual beneficiaries.

The government's inability, perhaps unwillingness, to give the committee anything beyond the names of the mills' directors reinforces suspicions that the decision to permit sugar exports was made to benefit entrenched political interests. Indeed, PAC chairman Junaid Akbar Khan stated that, more than just poor planning, the practice of first exporting surplus sugar and then importing it at a higher price reeks of deliberate policy manipulation to benefit a group of 42 families. The PAC's demand for full disclosure of ownership of the sugar mills, therefore, is justified. People have every right to know who, especially among the politically exposed, profits at their expense when public policy is formulated to serve private business interests.

While the PAC is to be commended for demanding transparency, this is not the first time the sugar industry has come under scrutiny for its political clout and policy manipulation. The sugar crisis marked by drastic retail price increases and domestic shortages due to exports in 2020 under the Imran Khan administration had led an inquiry commission that came to similar conclusions. The probe had found evidence of manipulation and profiteering within the sugar industry, and the crisis was attributed to policies that subsidised sugar exports. The commission had made recommendations for regulating the sugar trade, but these have remained unimplemented.

Likewise, the Competition Commission has been unable to recover fines it imposed on the industry for cartelisation and price fixing. Can the PAC break the sugar cartel or curb millers' influence in policymaking? Given the entrenchment of the owners in politics, there is little room for optimism.

## Strategic crisis management

**Dr Moonis Ahmar**

When survival of a country or an organisation is at stake, strategies to deal with a crisis situation are adopted. Composed of strategic planning and strategic thinking, those trying to manage a crisis must possess required skills to deal with a situation of critical nature in a strategic manner. According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, strategy means, "the science and art of employing the political, economic, psychological, and military forces of a nation or group of nations to afford the maximum support to adopted policies in peace or war."

Strategic crisis management is an innovative term and a concept which aims to professionally deal with a dangerous situation skillfully. According to AI overview, "Strategic crisis management is a proactive and integrated approach to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from crises. It involves embedding crisis management into an organization's overall strategic planning process, rather than treating it as an isolated function. This approach focuses on minimizing the impact of crises by anticipating potential threats, developing comprehensive response strategies, and fostering effective communication and collaboration."

Crisis in Gaza, Ukraine and Iran-Israel as well as the US-Iran relations and the Indo-Pak relations, apart from global economic problems, require strategy for their effective management. Likewise, economic crisis, political schism, water crisis and environmental crisis requires proper management skills with strategic foresight and vision.

According to Everbridge, "Crisis management is an organization's process and strategy-

based approach for identifying and responding to a critical event. A critical event can be defined as any threat, unanticipated incident, or negative disruption with the potential to impact an organization's people, property, or business processes.

Being prepared to respond to and recover from a critical event requires a sophisticated crisis management plan. Prioritizing crisis management also helps organizations mitigate the secondary consequences of critical events. Establishing a plan can help organizations move from a position of reactivity to proactively safeguarding against all the effects a critical event can have on an organization."

The concept of strategic crisis management can only be understood and applied in a society which is educated and enlightened and possess analytical skills and critical thinking. When concepts like strategy, crisis and management are rooted in the mindset of people, one can expect a country to deal with issues that pose threat to its survival. For example, economic predicament of Pakistan is a perennial issue.

If Pakistan is economically fragile, it will have its impact on politics, governance and foreign policy. Had there been a focus on the part of Pakistan's leadership on seeking excellence in strategic crisis management, the country would have been on the list of 20 top economies of the world. But, the reality on the ground is different because Pakistan's internal and external debt burden is around 250 billion dollars; its foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank amount to 15 billion dollars, exports are 30 billion dollars annually, per capita income is 1,700 dollars, GDP is 373 billion dollars, income

from tourism is less than one billion dollars a year and remittances are worth 32 billion dollars annually. Most of the state institutions like PIA and Steel Mill possess a debt of 200 billion rupees.

There is a direct link between economy and politics. As long as Pakistan is under political crisis, it will negatively impact its economy, governance, rule of law and foreign policy. The dearth of strategic thinkers and crisis managers in Pakistan mitigates hope to transform it as a vibrant state. In FY2025-26 Pakistan needs to return more than 22 billion dollars of foreign debt which will put enormous pressure on its economy. Strategic crisis management requires the leadership to have the qualities of hard work, intelligence, integrity, commitment, planning, management and vision. This also requires reversing the culture of corruption and nepotism.

Strategic crisis management needs to be examined and analysed from three angles.

First, the need to have a critical mass emerging from educational institutions having knowledge of strategy and crisis management is essential. Training, advocacy and best practices in a society also contribute towards training people capable of understanding and managing a crisis. Pakistan's dilemma is that its elites are devoid of commitment and professional expertise in strategy and crisis management. Those controlling the instruments of power formulate policies on an ad hoc basis without learning lessons from past mistakes. They also lack the commitment to learn from successful models of crisis decision-making i.e. how leadership in such countries is able to focus on right. Express tribu..

## Pakistan's changing climate

**Ali Tauqeer Sheikh**

THE ongoing floods paint a stark picture: the traditional monsoon system that has sustained the region for millennia is undergoing dramatic changes. Pakistan is at the epicentre of a climate transformation that is fundamentally altering the nature of monsoon rains and flood patterns across the country. No longer do the monsoons follow predictable patterns, locations, calendar and intensity.

How are the climatic changes redefining Pakistan's flood landscape? To begin with, research reveals that while the intensity of rainfall has increased exponentially, the number of rainy days during the monsoons has decreased. The changing climate is leading to the geographic redistribution of rain. Monsoons have primarily affected the northern mountainous regions. But recent years show a shift, with greater concentration of intense, heavy rainfall events now occurring in the southern provinces.

This trend marks a departure from the norm where the northern areas received the bulk of the monsoon rains. The southward shift alters the level of flood risks and challenges the existing infrastructure, signalling a transformation in how we experience the weather. It threatens the relevance of some of our flood management institutions, policies and approaches.

Researchers have observed that since 2010, temperatures in Pakistan's monsoon belt have increased at the rate of 0.18 degrees Celsius annually. This warming has profound implications, as warmer air can hold significantly more moisture: for every 1°C of temperature increase, the atmosphere's water-holding capacity grows by seven per cent. During the April 2025 heatwave, with temperatures up to 8°C above normal in some places, it translates to a dramatically increased atmospheric moisture capacity, setting the stage for devastating downpours. The intensifying sequence of stronger heatwaves followed by heavy rainfalls has become almost predictable and urgently requires an integrated policy approach.

Climatic changes are redefining the country's

flood landscape. Let's review five major trends in recent years: Non-riverine flooding: The country faces increasing vulnerability to non-riverine flooding. These floods, caused by intense localised rainfall, strike with little warning and overwhelm encroached waterbodies and drainage systems. Recent examples highlight this threat. In 2020, Karachi experienced its worst flooding-gener link description here in almost a century when 223.5 millimetres of rain fell in a single day. The 2025 monsoon brought similar devastation as Punjab's Chakwal district received 400mm in just 10 hours. Urban centres like Lahore and Rawalpindi have seen entire streets turn into rivers.

Addressing non-riverine floods needs a multifaceted approach: enhancing early warning systems, upgrading urban drainage infrastructure and bolstering community disaster readiness. Crucially, the National Flood Protection Plan IV (2015-2025) requires comprehensive revisions to fully integrate cutting-edge climate science, including advanced modelling for the increasing intensity and frequency of precipitation events, to effectively manage these emerging non-riverine flood sources.

Cloudbursts: Sudden, intense rainfall over small areas has become frequent. These extreme events, where rain greater than or equal to 100mm falls hourly, can devastate communities within minutes. Azad Kashmir, KP and Gilgit-Baltistan have seen a rise in flash floods and landslides, triggered by heatwaves in the upper Indus Basin, as seen in the Babusar cloudburst this month. However, some officials, rather than addressing the problem of inadequate infrastructure or limited response capacity, erroneously label all heavy rainfall as cloudbursts, as seen in the case of Chakwal and Islamabad's Saidpur village. This mischaracterisation undermines credibility and may impede efforts to introduce risk insurance and risk transfer mechanisms.

Koh-i-Sulaiman: This mountain range, separating parts of Balochistan from KP, Punjab and Sindh, has emerged as a

deadly source of flash floods. Intense rainfall generates powerful torrents that race into populated valleys, affecting south Punjab's D.G. Khan and Rajanpur districts. This has led to submerged villages, burst dams and mass displacement, affecting some 700,000 people and inundating over 300,000 acres in D.G. Khan and Rajanpur respectively in 2022. The 2024 torrents recorded flows exceeding 70,000 cusecs. Ironically, these districts offer ideal options to harness floodwaters for nature-based solutions.

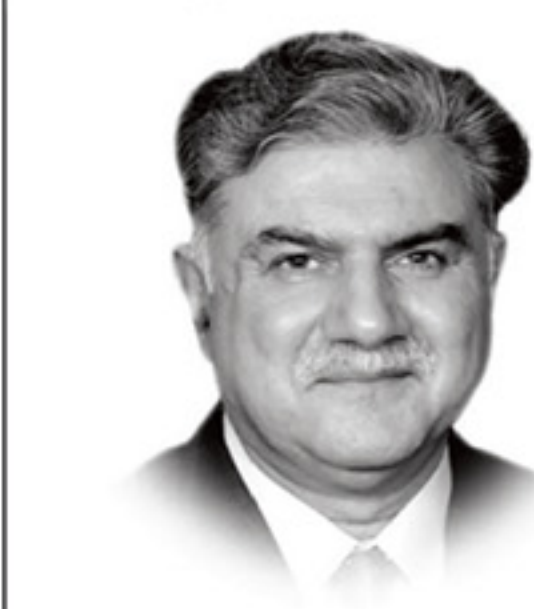
Salt Range and barani areas: These areas have seen a notable increase in extreme weather events, including severe floods from intense monsoon rains, frequent heatwaves, hailstorms and occasional higher-elevation snowfall. Together, they underscore growing climate volatility, resulting in greater risks of flash floods, crop losses and community disruptions. While the authorities have responded with emergency measures, local flooding is made worse by the loss of topsoil and the bursting of unregulated private check dams, which damages the ecology.

Urban flooding: Pakistan's haphazardly growing urban sprawl has become particularly vulnerable to new rainfall patterns. Urban flooding has transformed from occasional inconvenience to regular catastrophe. Cities like Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Islamabad face severe flooding as drainage systems prove inadequate. The urban heat island effect intensifies rainfall, while rapid urbanisation reduces natural drainage and overwhelms aging infrastructure, often disrupting economic activity.

In all, the changing rainfall patterns alter how water interacts with the landscape. Heat-induced soil hardening reduces infiltration capacity by 40-60pc, meaning intense rains run off the surface rather than being absorbed. This creates a situation where extreme heat events set the stage for more devastating floods. Heavy rainfall also saturates soil, preventing absorption during subsequent storms and compounding flooding during Dawn..

## China and America — competitive coexistence

**Inam Ul Haque**



Last week while discussing Sino-US rivalry, we concluded the improbability of a war over Taiwan. And although the US leads in many critical sectors, China is rapidly closing the capability gap, as capacity or scale has never been a problem for Beijing. This piece will discuss additional facets of Sino-US competition.

The comparison of both countries' national power potential (NPP) becomes confusing, as there are strong arguments on both sides which gravitate to declare either side a winner. In the May-June 2025 issue of Foreign Affairs, Kurt M Campbell and Rush Doshi argue that China has the advantage of 'scale and mass' compared to a 'strategically distracted and politically paralysed US'.

They define 'scale' as the ability to use 'size' for generating efficiency and productivity to out-compete rivals. They dispel the notion that 'an aging, slowing, and increasingly nimble China would not overtake an ascendant US in due course of time.' They make the case that on many critical metrics, PRC has already out-matched the US. And even if China falters and slows down, as many pundits believe, it remains formidable technologically, militarily and economically.

For China, scale or 'quantity' has a quality all its own' as the Soviet leaders used to say about the USSR. To undo the Chinese advantage of scale — the cited writers recommend - Washington should revamp its alliances, shunning the legacy approach of treating allies as 'dependent recipients of protection'; and instead consider its alliance architecture as a collection of 'managed relationships' for pooled and integrated capacity across military, economic and technological domains. They posit that the US must play for 'cohesion and collective leverage' against Beijing, playing for 'time and mass'. The combined economies of America, together with its main anti-China allies including Canada, India, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand and EU are \$60 trillion, compared to China's \$18 trillion.

In the absence of cited alliance, China is destined to win the race for power and hegemony all over the world, except Europe, where the US power is likely to be confined, in the mid to long-term. Despite China's challenges such as demography, dependency ratio (adult workers to children and retirees), labour shortfalls (compensated by AI and robotics in future) and debt, China will continue to play the long game.

Using the World Bank methodology, China economically 'surpassed' the US about a decade ago and is 25% larger today. PRC's productive capacity is three times larger than the US; its share of global manufacturing is 30% compared to America's 15% (projected to come down to 11% by 2030); China's cement production is 20 times, steel 13 times, cars 3 times, power generation 2 times larger than the US.

China produces almost half of the world's

chemicals, three quarters of electric batteries, more than two-thirds of electric vehicles, half of the world's ships, 80% of consumer drones, 90% of solar panels and almost monopolises rare earths' supply chain. China has helped install half of the world's industrial robots (seven times larger than the US) and is way ahead of the US in fourth-generation nuclear technology. So, rise of the Middle Kingdom to Global prominence is only a matter of time.

Realising the above inevitability, another analyst, Rana Mitter in the cited magazine, emphasises co-existence with China urging the West Plus to avoid policies that make conflict inescapable. To him, China ardently follows the Qing Dynasty (ruled 1644-1912) slogans of "Rich Country and Strong Army" and "Chinese for Essence and Western for Usage". Under President Xi Jinping, China has continued to pursue a 'harmonious world'; democracy with Chinese characteristics; and material progress without becoming Western. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has made PRC militarily strong and economically secure. It has pursued the 'Confucian Canon Project', stressing the importance of harmony in public life.

China's upward trajectory is likely to continue unless it involves itself or is drawn into military conflict. Although, Chinese nationalists would want Beijing to have a more muscular, aggressive and assertive international and regional posturing, shunning the image of a 'hesitant power'. A conflict would scare away China's neighbours especially in Southeast Asia, with whom China has territorial disputes, driving them to anti-China camp more staunchly. Conflict also erodes China's soft power. CCP understands this, hence, believing in

peaceful rise, it would avoid conflict over Taiwan, as argued last week. The Party in all pragmatism, would prioritise its quest for unification of Taiwan with mainland and continue with military 'posturing' only.

China's present and future leadership see value in 'cooperative existence' within an interconnected and inextricably linked world. Beijing has recently moved to that position by becoming peacemaker in the Middle East like other cooperative actors Türkiye, Qatar, the UAE, etc, even though their internal policies are not reflective of democracy and other trappings of Western-styled governance.

China would need to overcome global scepticism about its intentions, as some analysts argue. And sell itself abroad like America does, despite internal discord within the US over various issues. As the world sees more strongmen in positions of power and democracy eroding, China's humanistic values steeped in Confucianism can lead to greater peace and amity under some sort of 'authoritarian welfarism'. Beijing can champion clean and green energy, for example, humanise AI, emerge as a technology hub and a centre of hybrid cultures fusing elements from China and the West, creating a more peaceful Global Order than the one that brought wars, destruction, pain and suffering.

A Wess Mitchell partially emphasises the above sentiment by stressing "The Return of Great-Power Diplomacy" as a way forward. Since the US is increasingly becoming militarily incapable to fight forever wars, especially in the future against China and Russia simultaneously, it must return to 'strategic diplomacy' by containing the weaker (Russia) partner through détente and focusing against the stronger (China) and nudge Europe along. He also emphasises building the largest possible coalition against China, starting in Asia.

From the above discussion, one thing is clear. Chinese power is unsettling to the West with strong contenders for containing it or coexisting with it competitively. Drawing Beijing into war may be necessary for Western hawks, and CCP needs to reckon with it. Express tribu..

## Götterdämmerung

**F.S. Aijazuddin**

World War II detonated in sequence: the Anschluss or annexation of Austria by Germany in March 1938; Germany's invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939; and Hitler's incursion (with Stalin's support) into Poland in September 1939.

World War III began in 1945. It has been an ongoing affair, fought in Vietnam, Cambodia, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Egypt. It is now in Yemen, in Gaza and in Ukraine. It will, if President Donald Trump has his way, soon spread across the globe. No single leader since Hitler has made militarisation his mantra. Trump is not content on ensuring, as past US presidents have done, that the US had the capacity to defend itself against any aggressors foolhardy enough to cross the Atlantic or the Pacific oceans. He wants every ploughshare in the world converted into swords.

For the moment, his attention is riveted on European countries and Japan. He demands that they become responsible more for their own defence rather than relying on the US as their guarantor of the last resort. In this, he has the support of, for example, another Donald — Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who advised his EU colleagues: "Don't ask America what it can do for our security. Ask yourselves what we can do for our own security." (Tusk cruelly inverted J.F. Kennedy's famous phrase: "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.")

WWIII began in 1945. It has been an ongoing affair.

Trump's demand is for an increase in defence spending to five per cent of each country's GDP (more than twice the EU's current average). Germany spends 1.9pc,

France 2.1pc, Britain 2.3pc and Japan 1.4pc. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Ukraine spends 34pc, Israel 8.8pc, and Saudi Arabia 7.3pc. If Trump's proposal succeeds, EU Nato members must raise their defence budgets by €613 billion (\$708bn) annually. (EU green and social goals are a poor second at €375 bn.)

Trump's plan is less to reinforce Europe's defence than feed America's voracious military-industrial complex. In FY2024, the US foreign military sales system was \$117.9bn, a 45pc increase over FY2023. Prominent customers were Türkiye \$23bn, Israel \$18.8bn and Romania \$7.2bn.

It is reported that "close to half of the fighter jets in active service across European air forces originate from the US, while American — rather than European — missile defence systems remain the most widely deployed on the continent". To avoid becoming another Ukraine, Poland has acquired so many tanks that it has more than the British, French and German armies combined.

In 1961, President Dwight Eisenhower (once a general) warned his country against the "conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry". He added: "We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."

It has, Trump does not have the time to read Eisenhower's farewell speech, nor do the contractors who benefit from the Pentagon's largesse. One report reveals that during 2020-2024, "out of the total defence spending of \$4.4 trillion, private firms. Dawn..

TENDER NOTICE		
The Superintendent Govt: Dairy Farm, Quetta invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. TSE-252607796531		
Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPBRA GOB. Tender Fee Rs.1000/-		
S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	Animal Food & Medicine (Total Item(s) Count: 16)	2%
2	Medical Equipment and Accessories (Total Item(s) Count: 16)	
3	Sports Items (Total Item(s) Count: 16)	
4	Structures and Building and Construction and Manufacturing Components and Supplies (Total Item(s) Count: 16)	
5	Material Handling and Conditioning and Storage Machinery and their Accessories and Supplies (Total Item(s) Count: 16)	
6	Tools and General Machinery (Total Item(s) Count: 16)	
Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 1,000,000 in Previous 3 Years Turn over of at least 2,000,000 PKR in 3 Subsequent Previous Years Presence in Active Tax Payer List Sales Tax Certificate The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan JV is not permissible Submission of the required Bid Security In case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as in-eligible and non-responsive Submission of the required Bidding document Fee Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 1,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 15 August, 2025 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 15 August, 2025 till 12:00 PM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 01:00 PM Address: Office of the Superintendent Govt: Dairy Farm Livestock and Dairy Development Department Bawdry Road, Quetta Phone no: 0333780445 Email: supgovdairyfarm@gmail.com		
PRQ No.345/31-7-2025		
Superintendent Govt: Dairy Farm, Quetta		
www.dpe.gob.pk dpe.gob dpe.gob f dpe.gob		





## German biathlete Dahlmeier confirmed dead after GB mountaineering accident

Germany's two-time Olympic biathlon gold medalist Laura Dahlmeier was confirmed dead aged 31 on Wednesday after being hit by falling rocks on a Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan mountain.

The dangerous nature of the site made rescue efforts "impossible", her agency said in a statement issued on Wednesday, which confirmed her death.

"Rescue efforts to recover her failed and the operation was suspended," the statement continued.

The accident happened around midday on Monday at an altitude of 5,700 metres (18,700 feet) on Laila Peak in the Karakoram range, according to a statement from her team on her official social media pages.

Dahlmeier's climbing partner was able to sound



the alarm after reaching safety. "It was determined that a helicopter rescue is not possible," Areeb Ahmed Mukhtar, a senior local official in Ghanche district, where the more than 6,000 metre mountain is located, told AFP earlier on Wednesday.

"The conditions at the altitude where she was injured are extremely challenging," he added.

Shipton Trek & Tours Pakistan, which organised the expedition, confirmed

the ground rescue by a team of four that includes three Americans and a German mountaineer.

The 31-year-old was "hit by falling rocks," her team said on Tuesday, adding no one had yet been able to reach her due to the danger of further rockfalls and the site's "remoteness".

Earlier, a helicopter managed to fly over the location, and rescuers saw that "the experienced mountaineer is at least se-

riously injured", it said. "No signs of life were detected."

Muhammad Ali, a local disaster management official, told AFP that weather conditions have been "extremely harsh" in the region for the past week, with rain, strong winds and thick clouds.

Dahlmeier, an experienced mountaineer, had been in the region since the end of June and had already ascended the Great Trango Tower.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier stated on Wednesday, calling Dahlmeier "an ambassador for our country around the world (and) a role model for peaceful, joyful, and fair coexistence across borders."

She won seven world championship gold medals, and at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. The news..



**ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday met Khair Muhammad, the father of mixed martial arts champion Shahzaib Rind, and handed over a cheque of Rs5 million, fulfilling a long-standing commitment made to the athlete.**

## Pakistan likely to miss out on LA Olympics 2028: report



The International Cricket Council (ICC) has finalised the qualification process for cricket at the 2028 Olympics, with a report from British media outlet The Guardian indicating that Pakistan is unlikely to qualify for the men's event.

Following discussions at its annual general meeting in Singapore, the ICC has approved a regional qualification format to decide the participating teams.

The men's tournament at the Los Angeles Games will include six teams, with one automatic slot reserved for the host nation, the United States.

Under the proposed model, the highest-ranked team from each continent will qualify, ensuring representation from all regions.

This means India is expected to claim Asia's spot, while Australia (Oceania), South Africa (Africa) and Great Britain (Europe) will also qualify automatically.

With these allocations, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and New Zealand will miss out on direct qualification. One of the Caribbean nations could replace USA if their governance issues are not resolved after the ICC called on USA Cricket Board to resign this month.

Pakistan and New Zealand are unhappy with the ICC's decision, but while it has yet to be ratified by the board, it is unlikely to be reversed.

## Pakistan secure 2-0 win over Poland in world junior squash quarter-finals

CAIRO: Abdullah Nawaz and Anas Ali Shah powered Pakistan into the quarter-finals of the Men's Team event at the World Junior Squash Championship with a commanding 2-0 win over Poland on Tuesday.

Playing at the Black Ball Club, Abdullah gave Pakistan the perfect start by defeating Jan Samborski 3-1 in the opening match, putting his side firmly in control.

The opening game remained evenly poised at 1-1 after the first two sets before Abdullah staged an astounding comeback, outclassing Samborski 11-8 and 11-2 in subsequent sets.

Anas then represented Pakistan in the second game against Franciszek Michniewicz, who offered a notable fight but ended up losing it by 3-2. The national player made a triumphant start to the game, clinching the first set 11-7, only for Michniewicz to hit back by winning the next two and move one away from levelling the score for Poland.

Anas, however, displayed nerves of steel and staged a sensational comeback by winning the fourth set and forcing the game into the decider.

In the fifth and final set, Anas bamboozled Michniewicz 11-3 to round up a dominant victory for Pakistan with a game to spare, which was scheduled to be played between Muhammad Umair Arif and Mateusz Ptaszek.

Pakistan will next face England in the quarter-finals of the men's team competition at the World Junior Squash Championship today. For the unversed, Pakistan's journey in the individual competition of the World Junior Squash. The News..

## Pakistan Champions through to WCL 2025 final after India withdraw

BIRMINGHAM: Pakistan Champions have secured a place in the World Championship of Legends (WCL) 2025 final after India Champions withdrew from the scheduled semi-final, organisers announced on Wednesday.

The defending champions, who pulled out of their high-octane against Pakistan Champions earlier in the tournament, earned a miraculous qualification into the semi-finals by comprehensively defeating West Indies Champions which powered them past England Champions due to a superior net run rate.

India Champions, as a result, finished fourth in the standings, setting up a blockbuster semi-final with arch-rivals Pakistan Champions, who finished



ished at the top of the standings with nine points in five matches.

However, soon after the match was confirmed, the uncertainty continued to jeopardise the blockbuster clash, caused due to India Champions' reported refusal to partake in the fixture.

Meanwhile, as per the latest development, the

WCL has confirmed the abandonment of the clash due to India Champions' withdrawal, citing public sentiment.

Since the Pakistan Champions were ready to compete, they have now advanced to the final, where they will face winner of the second semi-final on Saturday.

"At WCL, we have al-

ways believed in the power of sport to inspire and bring about positive change in the world," the cricket league said in a statement.

"However, public sentiment must always be respected -after all, everything we do is for our audience."

"We respect the India Champions' decision to withdraw from the semi-finals, and we equally respect the Pakistan Champions' readiness to compete."

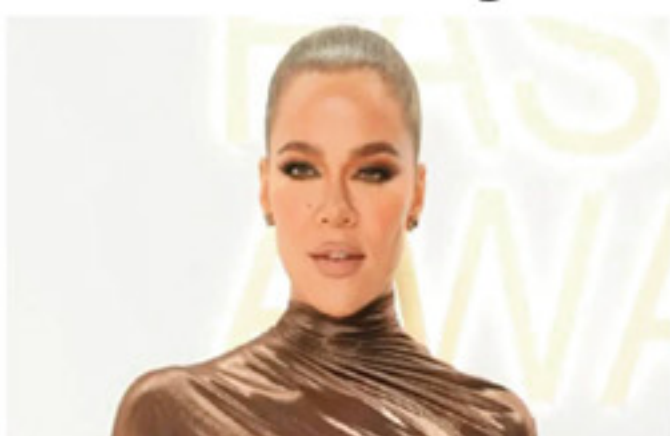
"Taking all factors into consideration, the match between the India Champions and the Pakistan Champions has been called off."

"As a result, Pakistan Champions will advance to the final," it concluded. The news..



**Demi Lovato appears to be reigniting her viral controversy from the past as she shared latest update on social media.**

## Khloé Kardashian's heartwarming reason for caring Tristan's brother



Khloé Kardashian is speaking out about her decision to become the primary caretaker for her ex-Tristan Thompson's brother, Amari, who suffers from a severe form of epilepsy called Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (LGS). In a recent episode of her podcast Khloé in Wonder Land, the Kardashian star, 41, explained why she stepped in to help care for Amari, 18, after the death of Tristan's mother, Andrea Thompson, in January 2023.

Kardashian shared that she has a special bond with Amari, who is severely disabled and requires constant care. "Amari has LGS, which is a form of epilepsy, and he is disabled," she explained.

"He can't walk or talk. He's never been able to talk." She noted that Andrea was the sole care-

taker for Amari when the family lived in Canada, but after her death, the family brought Amari to the States to live with them.

However, Tristan's busy NBA schedule doesn't allow him to care for his brother full-time, according to Kardashian. "Tristan is in the NBA, and he is in a different state literally every other day or every few days, and it's just not conducive for Amari to be on that many planes," she said.

"Amari has a handful of seizures a day with the type of epilepsy that he has." As a result, Amari stays with Kardashian in LA, and she has chosen to take care of him and be there for him. Kardashian shared that she loves "having Amari be a part of my family" and wants to provide him with the best possible life.

"We just want to provide Amari with the best, most beautiful life that we know how. And he deserves that," she said. She also opened up about why having Amari be a part of her family is beneficial for her kids, True and Tatum, and their extended family. "I think it's so important for my kids, my nieces and nephews, to be exposed to all different types of people in the world," she shared.

Kardashian also addressed questions about why she would help Amari when she is no longer romantically involved with Tristan. "People are always like, why did I do that? Me and Tristan aren't together, why would I take on helping with Amari?" she said. However, she explained that she had a great relationship with Tristan's late mother, Andrea, and had helped her with Amari's medical appointments. "My commitment to her has nothing to do with Tristan, and Amari deserves someone who will be there for him, take care of him, provide a great lifestyle for him and so Amari deserves my love and care, regardless of where me and Tristan stand," she said. The news..

## MGK's studio session takes nasty turn in 'Cliche' BTS video: Watch

MGK, formerly known as Machine Gun Kelly, got distracted by his cats during the making of Cliche, his leading song from the upcoming album, Lost Americana.

In a behind-the-scenes video posted to his YouTube channel on Thursday, July 31, the rapper is seen deep in the recording process when his creative flow got interrupted by his furry friend's poop. The video opens with MGK's cats frolicking the studio. Shortly after things take a gross turn when one of them poops on the carpet near his guitars, leaving his crew members disgusted.

"Why do they do this?" the Rap Devil artist exclaimed. "You know what's crazy? They sh\*t every time we make a hot song." Clearly unimpressed, he later mutters, "So disrespectful," at the sight of the pile. To make matters worse, his pets didn't stop there as another accident elsewhere on the carpet led the pet lover to declare, "It's a wrap on this carpet, man." However the dedicated cat dad grabs a few napkins and cleans up the mess himself, tossing it into a paper bag.

MGK's studio session takes nasty turn in Cliche BTS video: Watch

Despite the chaos, fans were entertained with one writing, "I can't believe the cat sh\*t on the carpet. It's so funny, it got me tearing up." Another joked, "MGK's good in every genre. Cat's out the bag, I believe." For the unversed, the Sun To Me singer is a proud father of three cats: Navi, the youngest, who loves to buck his older brothers. Tickets, the middle child, whom the Texas-born musician describes as skittish and trauma-prone, much like himself. And Whiskey, the oldest and his loyal "tour cat." "He's just my rider guy. Like a dog he follows. The news..

## Sydney Sweeney's viral online campaign sparks heated debate



Sydney Sweeney's new campaign for American Eagle has ignited a fierce online debate over its perceived messaging.

The campaign, titled Sydney Sweeney Has Great Jeans, features the Euphoria star modeling various denim styles while working on a car, auditioning for a spot in the campaign, and speaking directly to the camera about the new collection.

Some critics claim that the usage of the word "jeans" as a play on "genes" hints at eugenics, a discredited scientific theory that aims to improve the human race through selective breeding.

Author and scholar Sayantani DasGupta took

to TikTok to break down the controversy, claiming that the ad is "imbued with eugenic messaging" and that "a woman of color would not have been hired for this advertisement."

Culture advisor Rachel Lowenstein slammed the campaign for catering to the male gaze, saying that brands are "reverting back to the oldest trick in the advertising playbook: sex sells."

The campaign has also drawn comparisons to Brooke Shields' controversial Calvin Klein ad from 1980, which featured similar messaging about passing down characteristics from generation to generation.

American Eagle's stock has increased by 10% in just a few days, adding over \$200 million to the company's value.

Some fans of the campaign argue that the reaction is overblown and unfounded, with one commenter saying, "It's literally only a Sydney Sweeney is hot joke, nothing to get mad over." Others claim that the ad is being blown out of proportion, with one user writing, "Some people have too much time on their hands, its jeans commercial."

American Eagle has not issued an official statement in response to the controversy. The news..

## James Van Der Beek reflects upon painful cancer journey

Van Der Beek revealed to the outlet, "I have colorectal cancer. I've been privately dealing with this diagnosis and have been taking steps to resolve it, with the support of my incredible family. There's reason for optimism, and I'm feeling good."

During his appearance on Today show July 30 episode, he acknowledged that his children have become a rock for him.

While discussing his condition with the host, Van Der Beek shared how it went when he told his kids about his medical condition. Defending his choice of letting kids know of what he has been going through he spoke, "I'm far from an expert, but our approach was just to be as honest as possible, as honest to the degree of their understanding."

"They know. They can sense that Dad's having a tough day. They know if Dad's in pain," he added. "By not telling them, I think you're confusing them even more."

Van Der Beek also claimed that over time he has realized one particular quality of children.

"Allow yourself to be surprised by their resiliency," he told the host. "When you tell them what you're doing, and you tell them the approach, they can see it, and they can feel it. And I think it's also that your journey is their journey."

Heather McComb's partner reiterating his viewpoint claimed that we should not "rob them of the opportunity to show up for you."

He continued, "I have [my] kids making me tea. 'Dad, what do you need?' There's been a lot of beauty that's come out of it." The American actor reflecting upon the cancer journey shared that he believes, "Cancer is—I call it a full-time job."

The news..



**Lana Del Rey seemed to be basking in wedding bliss as she shared cherished memories from her big day.**



## Senate Panel Reviews Landmark AI Regulation Bill, Telecom Issues in Key Meeting

Islamabad: A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication was held today at Parliament House, chaired by Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan. The Committee held in-depth discussions on critical matters, including the "Regulation of Artificial Intelligence Bill, 2024," AI capacity building, the quality of Telecom Services, raids on illegal Call Centers, and Pakistanis progress in Chip Design and Language Modeling. The Committee reviewed the proposed AI legislation, introduced by Senator Dr. Afnan Ullah Khan, which aims to establish a legal and ethical framework for the responsible development and use of AI technologies in the country.

In light of the global shift toward emerging technologies, the Committee stressed the urgency of AI regulation. The Secretary of the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication (MoITT) informed members that a newly created Emerging Technology Wing has been tasked with accelerating innovation across four major areas: Artificial Intelligence, Semiconductors, Cybersecurity, and Quantum Technologies. Senator Saifullah Sarwar Khan Nyazee questioned the Ministry's financial capacity to support these efforts, to which the Secretary responded that Rs. 16 billion had been allocated under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for FY2024-25.

A robust debate followed regarding the Ministry's collaboration

with Jazz and NUST University on Pakistan's first indigenous Large Language Model (LLM). Senator Dr. Mohammad Humayun Mohmand strongly questioned the basis for selecting these partners, noting that other institutions had been overlooked. The Secretary clarified that Jazz and NUST were not officially selected by the Ministry but had taken the initiative and are independently financing the project. In response to further inquiries by Senator Afnan Ullah Khan, the Secretary confirmed that no public funds were involved. Senator Mohmand recommended that the opportunity be publicly advertised to allow wider participation, a suggestion the Secretary agreed to, stating that universities nationwide are now being invited to express interest.

During the briefing, Jazz representatives emphasized the threat to local languages and explained that the LLM aims to revitalize native linguistic heritage, though they cited data collection as a major obstacle. The Secretary also updated the committee on semiconductor development, reporting that 12 companies are currently involved in chip design, and 7,000 bachelor-level students are being trained in practical tech skills, positioning Pakistan to become a leader in this field.

The Director of the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) delivered a detailed briefing on recent crackdowns against illegal Call Centers operating across.



**ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Chairs the meeting regarding counter Terrorism and Write of state at PM Office as Field Marshall and COAS Syed Asim Munir and DG ISI Lieutenant General Muhammad Asim Malik and others also attended the meeting in Federal Capital.**

## Govt to start receiving applications for Hajj 2026 from Monday

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf Wednesday announced that the federal cabinet has formally approved the Hajj Policy 2026, outlining key procedural, financial, and logistic measures for the pilgrimage season.

Addressing a press conference here, the minister informed that the government will begin collecting dues under the official Hajj scheme from August 4, and the selection will be made strictly on a "first-come, first-served" basis in line with the Saudi timeline.

He said a total quota of 179,210 pilgrims allocated for Pakistan - 119,210 under the government scheme and 60,000 for private operators, pending final confirmation by Saudi authorities.

Minister Yousaf said the government scheme will offer both the traditional 38-42-day package and a shorter 20-25-day option. He said estimated costs will range between Rs 1.15 to 1.25 million, depending on the finalized agreements with service providers. Pilgrims will be required to deposit the Hajj dues in two install-

ments, with the first installment - Rs 500,000 for the long package and Rs 550,000 for the short one through designated banks, he added.

Minister Yousaf said applicants must hold valid Pakistani passports until at least November 26, 2026, and children under 12 years of age will not be eligible for Hajj this year. He said all pilgrims must be vaccinated with Saudi-approved vaccines.

He said the 'Road to Makkah' initiative will continue at Islamabad and Karachi airports. He said overseas Pakistanis will be allowed to remit Hajj payments to nominated bank accounts under the scheme. The policy mandates compulsory animal sacrifice payments through the official Saudi system, he added.

Minister Yousaf said private Hajj operators, including Dependent Hajj Companies (DHCs), will be subject to strict financial safeguards and transparent digital oversight. He said these operators must enter service provider agreements with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony and operate under real-time data monitoring to ensure transparency, pre-

vent double bookings, and ensure timely services.

He said a third-party audit system will evaluate the performance of both government and private Hajj schemes. The Punjab Information Technology Board will continue operational digital support, with the Ministry of IT overseeing supervision through NITB, he added.

Minister Yousaf said further measures include the deployment of emergency response teams, the continuation of the "Hajj Guardian Scheme" to compensate pilgrims for losses, mandatory training on logistics, rituals, and emergency protocols, and a fully digitized complaint redressal mechanism. He said the 'Pak Hajj App' and helpline will assist pilgrims with updates and issue resolution throughout the Hajj process.

The Hajj Policy 2026 will help ensure a transparent, efficient, and spiritually fulfilling experience for all Pakistani pilgrims through digitization, regulation, and improved service delivery mechanisms, he maintained. NNI

## Centre forms committee for talks on JI's 'Haq Do Balochistan March'

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has constituted a six-member committee to hold negotiations with the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leadership regarding the demands raised during the "Haq Do Balochistan March."

According to the official notification, adviser to the prime minister, Rana Sanaullah, would chair the committee. Other members include Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Information Attaulah Tarar, Minister of State Talal Chaudhry, the interior secretary and the Islamabad chief commissioner. The committee will engage with Jamaat-e-Islami's representatives and report its progress directly to the prime minister. A formal notification confirming the formation of the committee has been issued.

Earlier, it was reported that Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry met with Jamaat-e-Islami's Deputy Emir Li-aqat Baloch and Secretary-General Ameerul Azeem, where agreement was reached regarding the route and security arrangements for the long march originating from Quetta.

According to details, it was decided in a meeting held in Mansoorah that participants of the march would pass through

Muzaffargarh before arriving in Multan and subsequently Lahore. Chaudhry assured that security would be provided to the marchers along the route from Multan to Lahore.

He said that the federal government's committee would engage in dialogue with the organisers of the "Haq Do Balochistan" movement and efforts would be made to conclude the march in Lahore.

Further discussions concerning the possibility of the march continuing to Islamabad will be held after its arrival in Lahore. NNI

## PTF Launches First-Ever Pakistan Tennis League

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark move to elevate Pakistan's standing on the global sports stage, the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) has announced the launch of the country's first-ever Pakistan Tennis League (PTL). The initiative aims to promote the nation's soft image while nurturing world-class tennis talent.

The announcement was made by PTF President Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi during a "Meet the Press" session organized by the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA), presided over by RISJA President Abubakar bin Talat.

Aisam expressed confidence that the inaugural league would become one of the finest in the world, adding that top international tennis players will be invited to Pakistan to help enhance its image globally.

He emphasized that the PTF is placing strong focus on developing young talent to represent Pakistan at the highest levels. "The junior development program is already producing positive results," he said, highlighting that the national Under-14 team recently defeated arch-rival India in Sri Lanka. "This year alone, we have awarded wild cards to 21 players for international events," he added.

Aisam also shared that PTF is working on improving its structural framework in preparation for the league.

He noted that during a meeting with the President of the International Tennis Federation (ITF), discussions were held regarding the future of tennis in Pakistan, which he described as "bright."

He expressed gratitude to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for his continued support of tennis development in the country.



**LAHORE: Chief of Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem addressing during protest outside press club in Provincial Capital.**

## Aligning with global best practices key to Pakistan's economic future: ICCI President

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, has lauded the government's stated commitment to regulatory reforms and institutional transparency, but stressed that now is the time for tangible implementation to unlock the true potential of Pakistan's business landscape.

Speaking at a meeting with business leaders, he emphasized that while recent statements from the government reflect a positive intent, the business community continues to face challenges that can only be addressed through comprehensive and consistent reforms. He urged the leadership to move beyond policy announcements and deliver measurable results that restore confidence and stimulate investment.

President Qureshi pointed out that institutional inefficiencies, red tape, and unpredictability in regulatory enforcement remain major concerns for both domestic and foreign investors. He called for simplified taxation procedures, digitalization of regulatory approvals, and a one-window facilitation

system for businesses. "Our institutions must be restructured for transparency, efficiency, and accountability," he remarked. "Only then can we ensure a level playing field where entrepreneurship thrives and economic activity accelerates."

The ICCI President further suggested that the private sector should be taken on board as a strategic partner in the reform process. Regular consultation between government bodies and chambers of commerce, he said, would ensure that reforms are grounded in practical realities and not merely theoretical frameworks.

The ICCI President highlighted that countries which successfully modernized their regulatory environments witnessed an immediate boost in investor confidence and GDP growth.

"Pakistan's economic future depends on how swiftly we can align our governance structures with global best practices," he asserted. The business community is ready to support the government, but reforms must be visible, verifiable, and sustained, he concluded. NNI



**ISLAMABAD: Leaders of opposition parties are sitting on stage during All Parties Conference, in the Federal Capital.**

## Senate body on IT meets

Islamabad: A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication was held today at Parliament House, chaired by Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan. The Committee held in-depth discussions on critical matters, including the "Regulation of Artificial Intelligence Bill, 2024," AI capacity building, the quality of Telecom Services, raids on illegal Call Centers, and Pakistan's progress in Chip Design and Language Modeling. The Committee reviewed the proposed AI legislation, introduced by Senator Dr. Afnan Ullah Khan, which aims to establish a legal and ethical framework for the responsible development and use of AI technologies in the country.

In light of the global shift toward emerging technologies, the Committee stressed the urgency of AI regulation. The Secretary of the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication (MoITT) informed members that a newly created Emerging Technology Wing has been tasked with acceler-

ating innovation across four major areas: Artificial Intelligence, Semiconductors, Cybersecurity, and Quantum Technologies. Senator Saifullah Sarwar Khan Nyazee questioned the Ministry's financial capacity to support these efforts, to which the Secretary responded that Rs. 16 billion had been allocated under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for FY2024-25.

A robust debate followed regarding the Ministry's collaboration with Jazz and NUST University on Pakistan's first indigenous Large Language Model (LLM). Senator Dr. Mohammad Humayun Mohmand strongly questioned the basis for selecting these partners, noting that other institutions had been overlooked. The Secretary clarified that Jazz and NUST were not officially selected by the Ministry but had taken the initiative and are independently financing the project. In response to further inquiries by Senator Afnan Ullah Khan, the Secretary confirmed that no public funds were involved. Senator Mohmand recommended that the opportunity be publicly advertised to allow wider participation, a suggestion the Secretary agreed to, stating that universities nationwide are now being invited to express interest.

## Pakistan saddened by German Olympic champion's fatal climbing accident in GB

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday expressed deep sorrow over the death of German double Olympic biathlon champion Laura Dahlmeier, who died earlier this week in a mountaineering accident on Laila Peak in the country's Gilgit-Baltistan region.

The 31-year-old athlete was struck by falling rocks while climbing with a partner at around 5,700 meters in the Hushe Valley on July 28.

"Laura was an inspiration for athletes and dreamers across the globe," Pakistan's foreign office said in a statement. "Her indomitable spirit and legacy as a true role model will shine on forever," it added. "We extend our deepest condolences to her family, loved ones and the German people."

The Alpine Club of Pakistan said poor weather conditions had prevented a helicopter rescue mission. Two international teams later confirmed her death on the mountain, which stands at 6,069 meters in the Karakoram range.

Dahlmeier's body was not recovered in line with her previously expressed wishes, her management said. Her climbing partner, Marina Eva Krauss, was unharmed and has since returned to base camp in good health, according to the local authorities.

A winner of two gold medals at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, Dahlmeier retired from professional biathlon in 2019 at the age of 25.

Tributes have poured in from sporting bodies across the world, including the International Olympic.



**KARACHI: A man walks on the Clifton Beach with his camel, tourists ride camels and horses for tour the beach while daily life continues in Provincial Capital.**

## Joint Senate Committees Hold Meeting in Quetta; Chaman Chamber Highlights Severe Trade Challenges

Quetta: A Joint Meeting of the Senate Standing Committees on Commerce and Finance & Revenue was convened today at the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI) under the chairmanship of Senator Anusha Rahman and Senator Saleem Mandviwala. The meeting was attended by local business representatives, officials from key government departments, and members of the Chaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCCI), who brought urgent trade-related concerns to the fore.

The Chaman Chamber presented a detailed account of challenges currently paralyzing trade activities in the border region. Among the foremost issues was the inefficient implementation of the Barter Trade Mechanism under SRO 2023, which, rather than facilitating trade, has led to increased hardships due to lack of coordination between relevant authorities.

The Chamber strongly highlighted the unavailability of functional scanners and other customs clearance facilities at the Chaman border, leading to unnecessary delays and procedural hurdles. It was further informed that only a limited number of trucks are being allowed entry, causing serious congestion and demurrage losses.

The limited capacity at the NLC Terminal emerged as a significant

bottleneck, forcing hundreds of trucks to remain parked outside for days. Businessmen are compelled to pay exorbitant charges and penalties due to delays, while no proper shade, drinking water, toilets, or rest facilities are available for drivers and clearing agents.

Another serious concern was the lack of electronic documentation systems and physical absence of Customs and NLC coordination, which hampers transparency and efficiency. The NLC booking counter, the Chamber pointed out, is also situated at an inaccessible location.

Further, it was emphasized that the recently constructed Chaman Dry Port is still not operational, despite years of effort and investment. Additionally, no facilitation is being provided to traders or clearing agents, and constant changes in procedures without stakeholder consultation continue to affect trade flow.

Senator Anusha Rahman and Senator Saleem Mandviwala took strong notice of the issues and assured the business community that the Government is fully committed to resolving these impediments and senate platforms remain available to play their role. Both Chairs stated that they will further recommend to the govt relevant departments to follow up immediately.

## Pakistan says deal will reduce tariffs on Pakistani exports, expand market access

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said Thursday it had reached a trade deal with the United States after weeks of extensive negotiations, paving the way for reduced tariffs and deeper economic ties, as US President Donald Trump highlighted a new partnership to develop Pakistan's oil reserves.

Reacting to the development, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked the US president and expressed hope that the deal would pave the way for deeper collaboration between the two countries.

"I wish to convey my profound thanks to President Trump @realDonaldTrump for his leadership role in finalization of the historic US-Pakistan trade agreement, successfully concluded by our two sides in Washington, last night," he said in a social media post.

"This landmark deal will enhance our growing cooperation so as to expand the frontiers of our enduring partnership in days to come."

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday termed the trade deal finalized by Pakistan and the US a "win-win" achievement for both countries.

In a video message released by the Ministry of Finance, Aurangzeb said "Today marks the culmination of the journey that we started a few months back."

The minister shared that the authorities on both sides had "a very constructive final round of

discussions, which then led to finalising the trade deal." "From our perspective, we were always going beyond the trade imperative," said Aurangzeb, adding that trade and investments "have to go hand in hand".

The minister lauded his economic team, including the role of the private sector, in reaching the trade deal. He shared that investments in various sectors were discussed. "We will start with energy. Then there is mineral and mining, IT, and the new economy that we are talking about."

"We are in a good place today in Pakistan, in terms of where we have arrived before August 1. We have come a long way in terms of our overall strategic partnership between Pakistan and the United States," he said.

Meanwhile, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), the country's apex body of trade and industry, has welcomed the recent trade agreement between Pakistan and the United States aimed at tariff reduction, terming it a major step forward in strengthening bilateral economic ties.

"The trade agreement between Pakistan and the US regarding tariff reduction is highly commendable," Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of FPCCI, said in a statement on Thursday.

"The tariff agreement reflects the strengthening of bilateral cooperation, trade, and investment ties between the two countries," he added.

The remarks come after Pakistan and the US struck a deal that will result in lower tariffs for the South Asian nation as well as an agreement in which Washington will help develop Islamabad's oil reserves, the two sides said.

"We have just concluded a Deal with the Country of Pakistan, whereby Pakistan and the United States will work together on developing their massive Oil Reserves," US President Donald Trump wrote on social media on Wednesday.

"We are in the process of choosing the Oil Company that will lead this Partnership," Trump's social media post did not provide further details.

Pakistan faced a potential 29% tariff on exports to the United States under tariffs announced by Washington in April on countries around the world. Tariffs were subsequently suspended for 90 days so negotiations could take place.

US total goods trade with Pakistan was an estimated \$7.3 billion in 2024, according to the website of the Office of the US Trade Representative, up from around \$6.9 billion in 2023. The US goods trade deficit with Pakistan was \$3 billion in 2024, a 5.2% increase over 2023.

"The US is Pakistan's largest trading partner, and this agreement will further boost the country's exports. The agreement will lead to reduced tariffs on Pakistani products in the US and improve market access."



**KARACHI: A stunning view of the sea from the port in Provincial Capital.**