



# Islamabad POST

Friday, May 30, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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**Portuguese artist Pedro presents spell-binding performance in Capital**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Ishaq Dar calls for adapting to UN peacekeeping**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Alcaraz into French Open third round**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Prime Minister in Dushanbe

# Pakistan keen to have connectivity with C. Asian states

The Prime Minister underscored that our region could afford India's irresponsible and unlawful actions since 7 May 2025, which amounted to acts of war and violation the UN Charter and international law

DNA

DUSHANBE: At the invitation of Government of Tajikistan, H.E. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan arrived Dushanbe today, to participate in the International High-Level Conference on Glaciers' Preservation (ICGP) being held on 29-31 May, 2025. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising the Information Minister Attaulah Tarar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi, and senior officials. Upon arrival at Qasr-e-Millat, he was received by the Prime Minister of Tajikistan H.E. Qohir Rasulzoda. In the evening, the Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Upon arrival at Qasr-e-Millat, the President welcomed the Prime Minister and the accompanying delegation. The two leaders held in-depth and wide-ranging discussions covering various aspects of bilateral cooperation, as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest. During the discussions, the President and Prime Minister fondly recalled the signing of historic Strategic Partnership Agreement during the The two leaders reviewed bilateral co-operation across all areas, including political, trade and economic, energy, defence, security, and regional connectivity. They agreed to actively pursue new avenues for cooperation, with a focus on fostering investment opportunities, enhancing educational linkages, prompting cultural exchanges, advancing information technology collaboration and strengthening people-to-people contacts. On CASA-1000, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to positioning it as a pivotal project for regional integration. Welcoming the holding of CASA-1000 Inter-Governmental Council in Dushanbe on

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## PM for safer, more effective missions

DNA

LACHIN (AZERBAIJAN): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday urged the international community to assess the challenges faced by UN peacekeeping forces, reaffirming Pakistan's steadfast commitment and support for all efforts aimed at strengthening UN peacekeeping missions. "This day provides an appropriate opportunity to assess the challenges faced by UN peacekeeping forces, such as rising unilateralism, financial constraints, increasing threats to the safety and security of UN peacekeepers, misinformation campaigns targeting UN peace operations, and the impacts of emerging technologies," he said in his message on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers being observed today. He said that the Day not only served as a reminder of the sacrifices made by UN peacekeepers in the pursuit of international peace and security but also acknowledged their vital role in creating a peaceful, stable, and prosperous world. He highlighted that during the last seven decades of UN peacekeeping history, over 235,000 Pakistani peacekeepers have served in 48 UN missions globally and a total of 181 Pakistani peacekeepers had sacrificed their lives for international peace and security.

Continued on Page 06



DUSHANBE: Prime Minister of Tajikistan H.E. Kokhir Rasulzoda welcomes Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif in Dushanbe on 29 May 2025. – DNA

## Academia interaction

# Field Marshal says committed to a secure and prosperous Pakistan

While addressing the participants, the COAS encouraged the academia to play proactive role in promoting national narrative of harmony, stability, peace and progress



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), interacted with participants of 'Hilal Talks' at the Army Auditorium today. Spanning interactive sessions and group discussions on a range of international, regional and national issues, Hilal Talks are intended to act as a forum for perspective sharing among

Continued on Page 06

DNA

RAWALPINDI: On 28 May 25, five terrorists belonging to Indian proxy Fitna al Hindustan were sent to hell in two separate engagements in Balochistan. An intelligence based operation was conducted in Loralai District, on reported presence of Fitna al Hindustan terrorists.

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### UNICEF launches campaign against child marriage

DNA

KARACHI: The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has launched a video campaign featuring Unicef's National Ambassador for Child Rights Saba Qamar to raise awareness about the urgent need to end child marriage in the country. The video called on communities to speak up against the practice and reinforced Unicef's commitment to protect the rights of children and empower girls across Pakistan, the UN agency announced on Thursday. In the video, Qamar, highlighted the impact of child marriage on young girls' futures and called for unified action to protect children.

### Interior Minister attends upon injured cop

SAIFULLAH ANHAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visited PIMS Hospital and met with injured police constable Jaffar Jahangir, who was wounded in a firing incident by robbers. He inquired about the constable's well-being and offered prayers for his complete recovery. He appreciated the high morale of Constable Jafar Jahangir and expressed good wishes for his full recovery. Interior Minister directed that the injured constable should receive the best possible medical treatment and ensured that no effort should be spared in his care. "We stand with you and are praying for your speedy recovery," said Mohsin Naqvi.

## PTI-Establishment detente

# Imran rejects dialogue path despite 'important message'

PTI founder reportedly declines talks, orders party leadership to prepare for street agitation instead

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Just as hopes for a fresh round of dialogue between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the federal government appeared to be gaining momentum – reportedly with encouragement from key quarters – PTI founder Imran Khan has opted once again for mass mobilisation over negotiations. According to well-placed sources, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Ameen Gandapur had recently told Khan and his party leaders to have received a positive signal from the 'right quarters' to initiate talks with the federal government. These signals were interpreted as an indirect nod from the establishment, which has distanced itself from direct political engagement with PTI in recent months. However, when the message was conveyed to the incarcerated PTI chief, he reportedly declined the offer and instructed his party leadership to prepare for street agitation instead. Party insiders claim that Khan remains convinced that public pressure remains the most effective tool to force a political breakthrough. This marks the second major breakdown

of a possible dialogue initiative in recent months. In November last year, another attempt collapsed when PTI's leadership, allegedly under the influence of former First Lady Bushra Bibi, decided to push its rally beyond Sangiani to D-Chowk in Islamabad. The move, sources admit, alienated potential mediators and hardened the other side's stance at a time when it was reportedly open to talks. Interestingly, this time around, Barrister Gohar had conveyed Khan's approval in principle to respond positively to a public dialogue offer made by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on the floor of the National Assembly. The offer came in the wake of PTI's rare display of unity with the government and armed forces during the recent border tensions with India. Yet, within a week, Khan reversed his position in a subsequent meeting with senior party leaders, citing a "misunderstanding" and reiterating that no negotiations would take place unless they were directly with the establishment. Sources familiar with internal deliberations said that CM Gandapur informed the PTI leadership that there was a clear indication from

Continued on Page 06

## Pakistan enters crypto race

Bilal Bin Saqib unveils Pakistan's strategic Bitcoin reserve, 2,000MW mining plan

DNA

LAS VEGAS: In a landmark announcement at Bitcoin Vegas 2025, Pakistan's Minister for Crypto and Blockchain Bilal Bin Saqib unveiled the country's first government-led Strategic Bitcoin Reserve, marking a historic pivot in the nation's digital and financial outlook.

EDITORIAL ON PAGE 5

Addressing a global audience that included US Vice President JD Vance, Eric Trump, and Donald Trump Jr, he positioned Pakistan as a forward-looking digital hub, powered by its tech-savvy youth and strengthened by a shift toward decentralised finance. "I'm not just here as a minister," Saqib said during his keynote.

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## Budget to be presented on June 10

Budget for FY26 being finalised with IMF consultation, NEC date may be revised

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Federal Finance Secretary Imdadullah Bosal has said that the federal budget will be presented on June 10, during an informal conversation with the media on Thursday. He added that the date of the National Economic Council (NEC) meeting may be revised, and that the budget for the new fiscal year is being finalised in consultation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Bosal also said Pakistan and

Continued on Page 06

# French envoy reaffirms full support for AFD-funded development projects

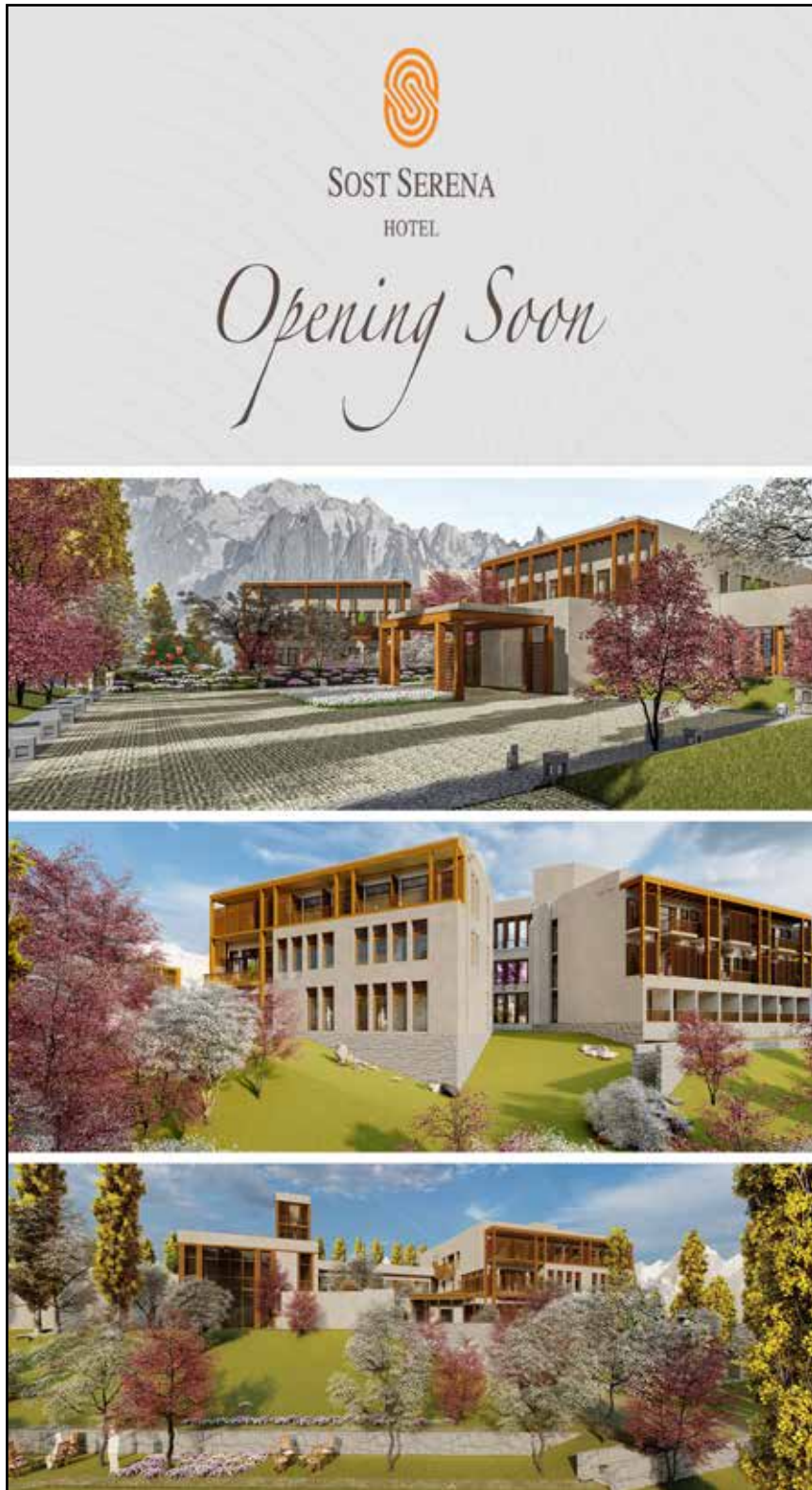
ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey during a call on meeting with Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema here Thursday discussed strengthening bilateral economic cooperation and reviewing progress on joint development initiatives. According to press release issued by Economic Affairs Division the meeting was also attended by Vincent



Thevenot, Country Director of the French Development Agency (AFD). On the occasion, Cheema expressed appreciation for the continued support extended by the government of France through the French Development Agency (AFD). He noted that since 2008, France has been a valuable development partner in key sectors such as energy, urban development, municipal services, and technological advancement. He highlighted that 14 projects are currently being implemented with AFD's assistance, and seven more are in the pipeline. The Minister expressed hope that these pipeline projects will be approved soon by the AFD Board. While talking about the projects which are in pipeline, the minister particularly emphasized the importance of the Rural Development and Climate Resilience initiative for Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and the Urban Wastewater Governance Project for major cities in Punjab. He highlighted that the rural development project of GB aims to improve essential infrastructure and services, including the construction of 216 drinking water schemes and 70 piped sewerage systems, installation of micro-hydropower units generating up to 1,200-1,300 kilowatts, retrofitting of 3,000 homes, and energy-efficient construction of another 700.

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# CJP for AJDF timely, effective utilization

The apex body extended the purview of Free Legal Aid Committees to the High Courts by enhancing the lawyers professional fee along with increase in funding limit to these Committees

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan and Chairman, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi chaired the 19th meeting of the Governing Body, Access to Justice Development Fund (AJDF) in the Conference Room of the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday. Chief Justices of Lahore High Court, High Court of Balochistan, Islamabad High Court, High Court of Sindh, Peshawar High Court, Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice, Additional Finance Secretary, Finance Division and Secretary, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan attended the meeting. Syeda Tanzeela Sabahat, Secretary, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP) gave a brief overview of AJDF, its mandate and overall performance with regard to funds released under various AJDF windows specifically for infrastructure

development and projects executed in Underdeveloped Regions to bring them at par with other areas of the country. She also updated about the provision of free legal aid to deserving litigants under District Legal Empowerment Committees (DLECs), provision of litigant-oriented conveniences and amenities, projects completed and trainings of justice sector stakeholders through Judicial Academies. The CJP underscored the need for timely and effective utilization of the funds released to respective High Courts and appreciated the role of Fund in capacity building and infrastructural development of the district judiciary throughout Pakistan. The Governing Body approved the suggestion floated by the HCs for utilization of the funds under UDR window exclusively for solarization of courts and establishment e-Libraries for one year in the underdeveloped districts of the country. In addition, the projects of

Lahore High Court for provision of missing facilities to female judicial officers and litigants in district courts were also approved. The apex body also approved mechanism for smooth and timely completion of projects funded from AJDF. The Governing Body approved the recommendations of the Technical Evaluation Committee, AJDF regarding projects undertaken through Legal Empowerment, Judicial & Legal Research and Legal Innovation Windows for timely completion. The apex body extended the purview of Free Legal Aid Committees to the High Courts by enhancing the lawyers professional fee along with increase in funding limit to these Committees. Annual accounts and funds allocation for FY 2023-24 and budget for FY 2025-26 were also approved. The CJP thanked all the participants for their valuable time and contribution to the Governing Body proceedings.



ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan and Chairman, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi chaired the 19th meeting of the Governing Body, Access to Justice Development Fund (AJDF) on Thursday.

## PSX stays bullish, gains 638 more points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 638.50 points, a positive change of 0.54 percent, closing at 118,971.41 points as compared to 118,332.91 points on the last trading day. A total of 741,654,162 shares were traded during the day as compared to 690,389,276 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 23.911 billion against Rs 23.828 billion on the last trading day. As many as 466 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 268 of them recorded gains and 159 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 39 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 137,517,831 shares at Rs 1.43 per share, K-Electric Limited with 119,635,956 shares at Rs 5.52 per share and PTCL with 65,676,043 shares at Rs 26.23 per share. PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 2,427.65 per share closing at Rs26,704.13 whereas runner-up was Khyber Textile Mills Limited with Rs 230.64 rise in its share price to close at Rs 2,537.01 Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 175.71 per share price, closing at Rs 10,108.33, whereas the runner-up Supernet Technologies Limited with Rs 66.88 decline in its per share price to Rs 818.69.—APP

## Efforts afoot to empower youth: Muqam

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SADR Engr Amir Muqam here Thursday said that Federal Government was promoting sports under the Prime Minister's Youth Program in order to raise Pakistani flag high internationally. He expressed these views while addressing an impressive function of Boxing trial Peshawar region for women under the Prime Minister's talent hunt youth sports league as a chief guest at Qayyum Sports Complex here. In his key note address, Engr Amir Muqam said that Pakistan has ruled over cricket, squash, hockey and snooker in world. He said the Prime Minister's talent hunt programme was aimed to encourage youth towards sports, education, vocational training and other socio-economic fields. He said that hundreds of thou-

sands of laptops were being handed over to the youth strictly on merit by the Federal and Punjab Governments. Amir Muqam said that these laptops will help students in their studies and research work. The Federal Minister said that Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has achieved remarkable success in all fronts including economic and defense. He said Pakistan has given a powerful response to the enemy during operation Iron Wall and proved its superiority in air, land and sea battlefield. Engr Amir Muqam said that PMLN Govt of former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has made the country's defense impregnable by conducting six nuclear tests on May 28, 1998. He said that Pakistan was a peaceful country and our desire for peace

should not be considered as weakness. He paid rich tributes to the armed forces Pakistan for defeating the enemy and inflicting heavy losses to the adversary during Maraka e Haq. Engr Amir Muqam that Pakistan was our country and urged youth to work tirelessly in their selected professions to make it economically stronger. He said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif saved the country from an imminent economic default and put the economy back on track of development and prosperity. He said that nation has highest expectations from youth of Pakistan as they will shoulder its future responsibilities and make it forward. He congratulated the players and organizers of the boxing event and assured that genuine problems will be addressed on priority basis.—APP

## PA speaker lauds Pakistani media role

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said on Thursday that Pakistan armed forces gave a strong response to Indian aggression and the country's media showed exceptional responsibility during the war-like situation. He said this while addressing a ceremony, held at the Lahore Press Club on the theme of "Defence of the Nation and the Role of Media," organised by the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), Lahore Press Club and the Punjab Assembly Press Gallery Committee. He stressed that economic stability was not possible without political stability. On Youme-e-Takbeer, the entire nation paid tribute to scientists, Pakistan armed forces and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, he added. The speaker said that the role played by Pakistani media would always be remembered in history.

Lahore Press Club President, PFUJ President and others also spoke.

**RCCI emphasizes boosting Pak-Uzbek bilateral trade**

RAWALPINDI: The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Islamabad hosted a high-level business forum aimed at strengthening trade and investment cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan. The event gathered leading representatives from Pakistan's business community, including prominent entrepreneurs, heads of industry associations, and executives from key economic sectors. In his address, RCCI President Usman Shaikat highlighted the importance of further strengthening economic relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. He stressed the need to harness the vast untapped potential in Central Asia, enhance bilateral trade volume, and foster closer collaboration between the business communities of both countries.—APP

## UNFPA, media join forces to tackle reproductive health in KP

PESHAWAR: In a significant move to address critical issues of family planning, reproductive health, and gender-based violence (GBV) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in collaboration with the Government of the Netherlands and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Thursday held the second provincial Media Coalition meeting here. Speaking as chief guest, Muhammad Ali Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister KP on Information urged media professionals to take a proactive role in raising awareness around family planning and sexual and reproductive health (SRH). "The success of any development initiative hinges on controlling population growth, which directly impacts the country's resources," he said. Saif emphasized the need to close the gap between policy and implementation, stressing that the lack of prioritization in family planning and reproductive health undermines public trust. He called for inclusive community engagement and the

strategic use of media—particularly radio and social platforms—to spread awareness, especially in remote areas. Sajid Amin Javed, Deputy Executive Director of SDPI, in his opening remarks, highlighted how cultural taboos and political instability continue to push family planning and reproductive health to the margins of policy discussions. "Family planning is essential for women's empowerment and sustainable development," he noted. UNFPA KP Programme Specialist Dr. Shahid Miskeen Khan shared sobering statistics on the province's demographic trends: a total fertility rate of 3.6 and a population growth rate of 2.4 percent, both significantly above the national targets. He pointed to delays in implementing the Council of Common Interests (CCI) recommendations, with only Rs1 billion released from a proposed Rs10 billion Population Fund. Dr. Khan also outlined UNFPA's ongoing efforts to reduce maternal mortality, support Afghan refugees, and expand access to SRH services. He introduced the

"Tawazun" strategy, which advocates for a balance between family size and resources in line with rights, responsibilities, and Islamic values. Faseeha Sharif from UNFPA KP reinforced the message that family health is a basic human right. "The media must portray family planning as a right, not a privilege. Vulnerable communities, including Afghan refugees, should not be overlooked," she said, encouraging journalists to leverage available data for more impactful reporting. The coalition meeting brought together a diverse group of journalists from print, electronic, and digital media in KP. Building on the momentum of the first coalition meeting held in December 2024, this session served as a platform to review progress, address challenges, and refine media strategies to tackle FP, SRH, and GBV more effectively. Discussions emphasized the need for culturally sensitive journalism, stronger accountability on provincial policies, and amplification of marginalized voices—particularly women and youth.—DNA

## Political stability must to achieve eco targets: Khurram

LAHORE: Advisor to Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad said that all the time political stability is inevitable to attain economic targets. He added that after the recent Pak-India war, Pakistan gained a very positive response from the entire world as Pakistan gave a calculated response to Indian attacks on its soil, besides showing an excellent diplomacy and building a global narrative that Pakistan is peaceful country. He expressed these views in the CFO Conference 2025 titled "Riding economic wave: Are we gaining momentum?" organized by Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP) at a local hotel. Khurram Schehzad said that after the war, Pakistan is capitalizing on this global shift that created immense opportunities for it, citing that in this connection, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with his team members is visiting Türkiye, Iran and Central Asia. He said that now a number of countries are keen to establish or enhance their trade and economic relations with Pakistan. Finance Minister's Advisor said that the neighbouring China is our time-tested fast friend and trade partner, and both the countries are improving their bilateral economic ties. He mentioned that he was part of the Finance Minister's team that had then been visiting the UK for a road-show on mutual funds, and it had become very unprecedented situation for them to continue with their agenda because of the eruption of Pak-India war, however, the Finance Minister had decided to participate in the road-show session of investors next day so as to clear Pakistan's viewpoint to the world. Interestingly, the session that had to a gathering of 70 investors, was attended by 120 investors from various countries. During that session, he said, we apprised the investors about Pakistan's viewpoint of peace and its measured response to the Indian aggression. We have very successfully convinced the participants that Pakistan is a peace loving country, they not only appreciated Pakistan but also offered to play a role in the ceasefire. They talked a lot on the investment and showed their keen interest to make investment deals with Pakistan. Khurram Schehzad said that Pakistan has great economic potentials in the sectors of mines and minerals, defense, Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence. He added that government is taking effective and viable measures to exploit these potentials to enhance its revenues and improve economy and governance. "When our investment and revenues will increase, we will be able to allocate more budgets on development side thus transforming Pakistan into a developed and prosperous country." He said that government is also focusing privatization to improve financial governance and management, asserting that privatization encompasses the energy sector, fiscal reforms, tax reforms, policy reforms, pension reforms and loss-making State owned Enterprises (SoEs). At the end, the ICAP President Saif Ullah presented a souvenir to the Advisor as memento to the event.—DNA

## German artist's exhibition Intention vs Convention: Fluid Presence held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts, National Art Gallery, Islamabad hosted the highly anticipated solo exhibition titled: "Intention vs Convention: Fluid Presence" by renowned German artist Dagmar Rauwald May 29th – June 3rd. This remarkable event, which included an immersive workshop, was a vibrant celebration of shared cultural heritage and creative exchange between Pakistan and Germany. The event was graced by Ambassador Shahid Kamal, Pakistan's Ambassador to Germany and a distinguished figure in international diplomacy, who delivered insightful remarks underscoring his deep commitment to fostering cultural



and intellectual ties. With a career spanning key diplomatic roles in France, the United States, Sweden, and Germany, Mohammad Ayoub Jamali, Director General of PNCA, along with curator Mariam Ahmed, extended their support and played a key role in bringing together

the exhibition Central to the event's success was the visionary curatorship of Farrah Mehmood, an esteemed Pakistani visual artist and educator. Farrah's dedication to nurturing cultural dialogue and artistic excellence elevated the exhibition, illuminating a path for future collabora-

tions between Pakistan and Germany. Ms. Dagmar Rauwald, a dynamic artist based in Hamburg, presented a captivating body of work that thrives on emotional expressiveness and conceptual depth. Her paintings, applied to transparent film with bold, sweeping gestures, evoke a tension between fluidity and solidity, lightness and opacity. By embracing transparent foils—either layered or singular—Rauwald immerses viewers in the immediacy of the present, abstracting real-world events influenced by media imagery and socio-political narratives. Her exploration of hybridity and evolving visual codes invites a profound dialogue that bridges Western and Eastern traditions, drawing inspiration from the fluid rhythm of Urdu calligraphy.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

May 03/Poland National Day

May 06/Bulgaria Armed Forces Day

May 06/UAE Armed Forces Day

May 07/ Kazakhstan Armed Forces Day

May 08/Czech Republic National Day

May 09/European Union National Day

May 17/Norway Constitution Day

May 21/Hungary Armed Forces Day

May 22/Yemen Republic Re-unification Day(National Day )

May 24/Eritrea National Day

May 25/Lebanon Liberation and Resistance Day


May 25/Argentina National Day

May 25/Jordan Independence Day

May 28 /Azerbaijan Republic Day

May 28/Ethiopia National Day

May 31/Brunei Armed Forces Day



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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& Rescue Services.4451122

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Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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Hospitals

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Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4


RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

MDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Interior Minister visits Injured Policeman at PIMS hospital

The tragic incident took place last night when robbers opened fire on police personnel, resulting in the martyrdom of ASI Sudheer Abbasi and injuries to Constable Jafar Jahangir.

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited PIMS Hospital today to meet Police Constable Jafar Jahangir, who was injured in a recent robbery-related shooting incident. The Minister praised the constable's courage and expressed his best wishes for a full recovery. During the visit, Mohsin Naqvi directed doctors to ensure the constable receives the best possible medical care and stated that no effort should be spared in his treatment. "We are all standing with you and praying for your speedy recovery," he told the injured officer. The Interior Minister also paid tribute to Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Sudheer Ahmad Abbasi, who was martyred in the same incident. He described him as a brave and professional officer and assured that the government would fully support the martyr's family. Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Islamabad IG Ali Nasir Rizvi, Chief Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Deputy Commissioner Irfan Memon, and other senior officials accompanied the Minister during the visit. The tragic incident took place last night when robbers opened fire on police personnel, resulting in the martyrdom of ASI Sudheer Abbasi and injuries to Constable Jafar Jahangir.

## ICT admin ramps up anti-dengue drive as cases emerge

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration have stepped up efforts to control dengue as the mosquito-borne disease begins to surface across various cities. With only a few cases reported so far, the administration is focusing on early measures to prevent an outbreak. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon chaired a meeting which was attended by the health officials. The meeting reviewed and compared dengue case reports from other major cities, including Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi. This analysis aimed to evaluate trends and learn from the preventive measures taken in these areas. According to the briefing shared in the session, only four dengue cases have been reported in Islamabad so far this season. Officials see this as an opportunity to take prompt actions to prevent further spread. The meeting also included a review of field operations carried out by Assistant Commissioners (ACs) in response to the detection of mosquito larvae in different parts of the city. These operations include inspections of residential, commercial, and open areas where dengue larvae are commonly found during the season. DC Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon urged citizens to support the ongoing anti-dengue campaign by cooperating with field teams and following the guidelines issued by the administration. He stressed that strict implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for dengue prevention is necessary to reduce the risk of infection. These SOPs include keeping water containers covered, cleaning rooftops and drains regularly, and avoiding water stagnation in and around homes. Memon directed Assistant Commissioners to take action without exception against individuals and institutions violating dengue prevention protocols. He emphasized that early enforcement is key to controlling the situation before it escalates. The district administration has also intensified public awareness efforts, including door-to-door visits, announcements, and inspections in areas considered sensitive. Health workers and volunteers have been deployed to inform residents about basic steps they can take to protect themselves from mosquito bites and reduce breeding sites. Surveillance teams are currently working across different sectors of the capital to monitor high-risk areas. Based on larva detection reports, targeted fumigation and clean-up operations are being carried out. The administration plans to continue these efforts throughout the season with regular monitoring, updates, and inspections. Authorities are also coordinating with local health departments to ensure that all reported cases are managed quickly and efficiently. With dengue cases rising in other cities, Islamabad officials are focusing on prevention to avoid a similar situation in the capital. By identifying early signs, involving communities, and enforcing SOPs, the administration hopes to limit the number of cases in the coming weeks. Officials have also warned that any negligence in following prevention measures could increase the risk of local transmission. They advised residents to report any suspected mosquito breeding activity to the relevant departments. The Islamabad administration has assured the public that it will continue its anti-dengue efforts through coordinated planning, rapid response, and community support. Regular updates and awareness campaigns are expected to keep the public informed and alert during the high-risk period.

## AIOU holds 1st session of 73rd BASAR meeting

ISLAMABAD: The 73rd meeting of the Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR) at Allama Iqbal Open University was successfully held yesterday. The meeting was efficiently conducted and supported by the Director of BASR, Professor Dr. Irshad Ahmad Arshad. The session began with a review of the implementation report of the previous decisions, followed by the formal presentation of the new agenda. Deans from various university departments, distinguished faculty members, subject experts, and PhD scholars actively participated in this important meeting. The research theses presented were meticulously examined. Commending the researchers' passion and academic quality, most of the theses were approved. Some were provided with valuable and constructive suggestions for further refinement. In the first session, 15 PhD students from the Faculty of Sciences presented their synopses. The participants not only appreciated their work but also praised their confidence and research approach. While addressing the meeting, Professor Dr. Irshad Ahmad Arshad remarked that the students' commitment, curiosity, and innovative approach in presenting new research topics was commendable. He emphasized that novelty and creativity in research are essential in today's era. It is noteworthy that the Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has repeatedly stressed that the focus of research should be the social and economic development of the country so that knowledge and research can directly contribute to national progress. The second session of the meeting will be held tomorrow, Friday, May 30, during which 11 PhD scholars from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, and the Faculty of Education will present their research theses.—APP

## IFA cracks down on dirty kitchens

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) on Thursday launched a large-scale operation against unhygienic and unsafe food practices in Islamabad, sealing several outlets and discarding harmful ingredients found during inspections. Islamabad's food safety teams, under the supervision of the Deputy Director Operations of IFA, Dr. Tahira Siddique carried out a major crackdown against substandard food providers across the city. The action was focused on areas including F-8 Markaz, Centaurus, Iqbal Town, Golra Road, Murree Road, and Barakahu. As part of the drive, 45 food units were inspected. Ten were fined a total of Rs 124,000 for failing to meet health and safety standards. Seven outlets were sealed after inspectors found serious violations of food safety laws. Dr. Tahira Siddique said that over 127 kilograms of harmful and expired materials were recovered and immediately destroyed during the operation. According to her, many food handlers were found operating without valid licenses. She added that several food points were using banned or low-quality ingredients in their products. During the inspections, unhygienic conditions were observed in many kitchens. Freezers were dirty, there was a strong foul smell, and proper cleaning systems were missing. In some outlets, rusty and unwashed utensils were being used. The use of non-food grade items was also reported. Officials said the premises lacked basic pest control and safety measures required under the food safety regulations. Dr. Tahira stated that authorities had tightened the monitoring process and would continue taking strict action against those involved in selling unsafe food. The Deputy Director stressed that food-related businesses must operate under clear guidelines. Those who violate them would face closure and legal action. She further said that there is zero tolerance for businesses that put public health at risk, while those who follow regulations

will be supported through public-friendly policies. This crackdown is part of the government's efforts to ensure that food being sold in the capital is safe for consumption. The Islamabad Food Authority has announced that such surprise inspections will continue and more strict steps will follow if violations are repeated. Food safety teams have also urged the public to report suspicious or unhygienic food outlets. Authorities have set up complaint channels to ensure swift action and to make the food industry more responsible and accountable. Dr. Tahira also emphasized that business owners must ensure proper training of their staff and acquire valid licenses. She said that maintaining hygiene, avoiding the use of expired or harmful items, and keeping the kitchen environment clean are non-negotiable requirements. She reiterated that the use of banned substances, poor handling practices, and ignoring cleanliness would not be tolerated. —DNA

## HEC, Kazakhstan to strengthen academic linkages

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, welcomed Ms. Anar Akyzbekovna, Rector of Astana Medical University, Kazakhstan, along with H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, and the Pro-Rector Academics of the university. According to official details, the meeting focused on strengthening academic linkages, fostering research collaborations, and exchanging best practices in medical education, quality assurance, and institutional governance. Dr. Imad from the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) shared insights on accreditation and recognition processes for foreign medical institutions. Both sides highlighted the importance of addressing language barriers to facilitate student and faculty mobility and discussed the recruitment of Pakistani students for higher education opportunities in Kazakhstan through HEC. The Ambassador also proposed establishing a Joint Commission to formalize long-term collaboration.—APP

## Pakistan, ADB eye carbon markets as next frontier for green growth

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik, met with a high-level delegation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Thursday, to explore collaborative opportunities in carbon markets and forge the path for a new climate strategy grounded in economic and environmental synergy. The meeting marked a significant step forward in aligning Pakistan's national climate strategy with international best practices and market-driven climate finance solutions. Both sides agreed to formulate a comprehensive, mutually aligned climate change strategy, with a specific focus on carbon credit mobilization, climate innovation, and outcomes-based project implementation. Dr. Malik assured ADB of full ministerial cooperation and hands-on involvement in the formulation of the strategy, emphasizing that it must remain impact-driven, transparent, and results-oriented. The delegation led by Toru Kubo, Senior Director of Climate Change and Sustainable Development (CCSD) reiterated ADB's strong support, noting that the Bank continues to assist its Developing Member Countries (DMCs) by catalyzing investments in low-carbon technologies, advancing carbon finance readiness, and enhancing the ability of countries like Pakistan to access and benefit from global carbon markets. The two sides also discussed how Pakistan can strategically link Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to its carbon finance agenda, thereby transforming climate action into a source of economic strength and international credibility. The meeting signals a growing recognition that climate adaptation and mitigation are not just environmental imperatives—but powerful economic levers.—APP

## National Polio eradication drive continues

ISLAMABAD: National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) has said that the national polio eradication campaign continued on Thursday with full swing on its fourth day. During the first three days of the campaign, 81% of children across the country have been vaccinated, according to the NEOC. In Punjab, 85% of targeted children have received the vaccine, while in Sindh, the coverage stands at 68%, the NEOC reported. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has achieved 86% coverage, Balochistan 74%, and Islamabad 63%, according to NEOC statistics. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 93% of children have been vaccinated, while in Gilgit-Baltistan, the figure is 91%, the NEOC added. To prevent cross-border transmission of the poliovirus, synchronized campaigns are underway in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, the NEOC said.—APP

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## Briefs

PM&DC starts  
licensing  
services in  
Lahore

ISLAMABAD: In a major step towards decentralizing medical and dental licensing in Pakistan, the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has officially launched its licensing system at the Lahore Regional Office, located at Shaikh Zayed Medical Complex. This marks the first time such services are being offered outside the capital, aiming to streamline processes for practitioners in Punjab. The new digital initiative is designed to simplify and expedite the registration process for medical and dental graduates, professionals, and specialists. By leveraging technology, PM&DC is eliminating traditional bureaucratic hurdles, reducing processing times, and promoting greater transparency, efficiency, and accessibility. A key advantage of the new system is that practitioners based in Lahore and surrounding areas no longer need to travel to Islamabad to address registration-related matters. The Lahore office will now handle full registration, license renewals, issuance of Good Standing Certificates, provision of duplicates, and updates to practitioner records—excluding issues related to teaching and practical experience. To support applicants, trained staff at the regional office will assist doctors who encounter difficulties with the online portal. Additionally, original certificates will be dispatched directly to practitioners through TCS courier services, while a copy may also be provided on request. Professor Dr. Rizwan Taj, President of PM&DC, hailed the launch as a pivotal moment in the organization's commitment to improving access for health-care professionals. "This is a step towards accelerating the licensing process through PM&DC's regional offices. By launching this initiative, we are empowering our doctors to begin their professional journeys without unnecessary delays," said Dr. Taj. He noted that this development is part of a phased rollout. Phase I covers Punjab through the Lahore office. In the coming months, Phase II will extend services to Peshawar and Karachi, followed by Phase III in Jamshoro and Balochistan, and Phase IV in Multan. He added medical and dental professionals can now visit the PM&DC Lahore Regional Office for application submissions, processing, and registration-related queries.—APP

Gold price  
remains  
unchanged at Rs  
349,300 per  
tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold remained unchanged at Rs.349,300 on Thursday, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat and 10 grams of 22 Karat gold also witnessed no change and were traded at Rs 299,468 and Rs.274,522, respectively. Per tola and ten gram silver were also traded at existing rates of Rs. 3,380 and Rs.2,983 respectively. The price of gold in the international market remained stagnant at \$3,309 whereas that of silver also remained constant at \$33.22, the Association reported.—APP

Expert highlights new avenues  
for Kyrgyzstan-Pakistan coop

He emphasized the need to enhance existing trade houses and establish new ones to serve as platforms for sustained commercial engagement. He also pointed to the strategic role of Kashgar—a Chinese city proximate to both nations—as a regional trading hub that can serve to accelerate multilateral business activity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: — Mr. Alibek Mukambaev, a distinguished Expert on International Development and Senior Administrative Assistant at the Organization for Security Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), delivered a compelling lecture at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad. His talk was part of the IRS's renowned Eminent Speaker Series, focusing on the evolving dynamics of Business-to-Business (B2B) and People-to-People (P2P) contacts between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan. Drawing on his deep expertise in regional development and international cooperation, Mr. Mukambaev highlighted the untapped economic potential between the two countries and proposed strategic initiatives to revitalize bilateral trade, which he noted remains significantly below its potential. He emphasized the need to enhance existing trade houses and establish new ones to serve as platforms for sustained commercial engagement. He also pointed to the strategic role of Kashgar—a Chinese city proximate to both nations—as a regional trading hub



that can serve to accelerate multilateral business activity.

A key recommendation from Mr. Mukambaev was for Pakistani businesses to consider Kyrgyzstan as a gateway for expansion into Central Asia, proposing it as a viable alternative to Russia for setting up companies and fa-

cilitating broader market access. This, he argued, would not only reduce logistical and regulatory hurdles but also foster greater economic resilience and diversification for Pakistan. "Stronger B2B and P2P ties are crucial for transforming historical goodwill into concrete economic

outcomes," he stated, calling for policy-level dialogue, targeted investment, and increased academic exchange to underpin this emerging partnership. The talk was well-received by scholars, diplomats, and industry experts in attendance, sparking a lively Q&A session that under-

lined growing interest in regional connectivity and South-Central Asia cooperation. The Institute of Regional Studies continues to serve as a vital forum for thought leadership and dialogue on issues critical to Pakistan's foreign policy and regional engagement.

Ahsan invites CAREC  
member states to link value  
chains with Pak SEZs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday invited Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) member states to integrate their value chains with Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and explore opportunities for cross-border industrial clusters, leveraging Pakistan's preferential trade agreements with China, ASEAN and the Middle East. He extended this invitation while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the fifth annual two-day CAREC Institute Research Conference, held in collaboration with the University of Sargodha (UOS). Themed "CAREC Connectivity: Promoting Trade and Trade Facilitation," the conference brought together a diverse group of national and international stake-

holders. Co-organizers of the event included the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Pakistan Single Window (PSW), Allama Iqbal Open University (AIQU), International Road Transport Union (IRU), Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan International Freight Forwarders Association (PIFFA), and the ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF). He said the conference was 'timely and essential' as in a world reshaped by climate shocks, geopolitical shifts, and technological disruptions, regionalism was emerging as the new realism. "Today, intra-regional trade among CAREC countries (excluding China) accounts for only 7% of total trade. In contrast, ASEAN countries trade over 22% among themselves," he said. This disparity, he said was not due to geography - it was due to underdevel-

oped logistics, fragmented regulatory frameworks, and limited institutional coordination. "Geography is not destiny. It is opportunity - if we choose to seize it," he said quoting a famous economist Paul Collier as saying. The CAREC region, Ahsan Iqbal said, with a population of nearly two billion and vast reserves of energy, minerals, and talent was not short on potential, stressing the need for a unified development strategy backed by collective action. Sharing Pakistan new development vision 'URAAAN Pakistan,' the minister said the vision was based on five strategic pillars including Exports, Equity and Empowerment, E-Pakistan, Environment, Energy and Infrastructure. This strategy, he said was not isolated from regional ambitions rather aligned fully with CAREC Vision 2030.

Under URAAN, he said, Pakistan was expanding high-value exports like IT, Halal food, and engineering goods. Pakistan's IT exports, for example, have crossed \$3.5 billion and are growing at 20% per year, empowering youth through digital skills, mobilizing green investment, with 10 GW of solar projects in the pipeline under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), positioning Pakistan as a trade and logistics hub, connecting CAREC to maritime trade via Gwadar and Karachi besides facilitating in trade - From Intent to Implementation. The minister said, Pakistan Single Window (PSW) has reduced customs clearance time from 8 days to less than 48 hours. "It is now being expanded to integrate with Central Asian corridors, making it a model for CAREC-wide digital trade interoperability."

Pakistan's KarotHy-  
dropower Project  
gains spotlight

ISLAMABAD: Jointly hosted by China's Ministry of Water Resources, the Sichuan Provincial Government, and the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD), the 28th ICOLD Congress and 93rd Annual Meeting successfully concluded in Chengdu, China. The event brought together government officials, experts, and scholars from over 80 countries involved in dam and reservoir development worldwide. Participants jointly signed the 'World Declaration of Chengdu to promote global collaboration in dam engineering', and shared professional insights into the success of numerous major water infrastructure projects, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday. One such project—the 720MW Karot Hydropower Project located at the border of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Punjab—was showcased as a successful case study. The presentation highlighted the significant impact of Chinese-supported hydropower projects on regional economies, leaving a deep impression on the audience. Moazz Awan, Senior Manager at China Three Gorges South Asia Investment Ltd., shared the Karot case during the conference and briefed the CEN. "The Karot Hydropower Project is quite unique both in terms of its design and its strategic geographical location, being near major urban centers like Islamabad and Rawalpindi. What makes it even more exceptional is its financing model—where Chinese financial institutions partnered with international lenders under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It represents a truly multilateral effort. Karot is also the first large-scale hydropower project to be completed and operational under BRI, marking a major milestone and serving as a powerful example of how BRI and CPEC projects are helping Global South countries meet their development and climate goals." The Karot Hydropower Project (HPP) generates approximately 3,206 GWh of clean, renewable energy annually and plays a critical role in reducing carbon emissions by an estimated 3.5 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.—DNA

New tariff policy expected to be  
announced soon by PM: Awais

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Thursday said that a new tariff policy is expected to be announced soon by the Prime Minister to make industries more competitive. Addressing at a Princeton Energy Workshop here, the minister highlighted recent reforms, future plans, and the ongoing shift towards decentralized and renewable energy systems in the

country Sardar Awais said the government was making all out efforts to provide relief to consumers and it has implemented significant reforms in the power sector over the past year. Industrial electricity tariffs have been reduced by 30%, providing relief to businesses. Efforts are underway to lower power prices sustainably, he added. Leghari noted that Pakistan is not waiting for a renewable energy

revolution—it is already happening. He called solar energy an effective option, with more solar generation being added to the grid. He pointed out that large parts of the agriculture sector and segments of industry have already moved to solar power. Official data shows that nearly 6,000 megawatts of solar capacity is installed, with more in the pipeline. The shift away from traditional

grid power has contributed to a drop in national electricity demand over the past three years. Solar power generation has risen, and 27,000 agricultural tube wells in Balochistan will be converted to solar energy within the next few months. The government has also shut down 3,000 megawatts of furnace oil-based power plants in the past few months, the minister said.—APP

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NUML hosts successful  
open house and job fair

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD : The Faculty of Engineering and Computing at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) successfully organized its Open House and Job Fair-Spring 2025, offering a dynamic platform for final-year students to showcase their innovative Final Year Projects (FYPs) and engage with leading industry professionals. The event featured an impressive array of projects by students from the departments of Computer Science, Software Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Mathematics. Exhibits spanned a wide range



of cutting-edge domains, including the Internet of Things (IoT), Robotics, Ar-

tificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Mobile Application Development, Web Pro-

gramming, as well as Pure, Applied, and Computational Mathematics. The innova-

tion, technical depth, and problem-solving approach displayed by the students received widespread acclaim from visiting industry representatives. The Open House not only highlighted the academic excellence of NUML's engineering and computing disciplines but also strengthened industry-academia linkages. The Job Fair component of the event witnessed robust participation from various industry partners. Representatives from leading tech firms conducted on-spot interviews, resulting in multiple job offers and internship opportunities for NUML graduates. The event concluded on a high note, reinforcing NUML's commitment to academic excellence, innovation.



## Pakistan takes a major step towards a Crypto revolution

IN a historic and unprecedented move, Pakistan has officially entered the global digital economy with the announcement of its first state-backed Bitcoin Reserve, a bold step that signifies the country's serious commitment to integrating blockchain and cryptocurrency into its financial future. The groundbreaking announcement was made by Bilal Bin Saqib, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Blockchain and Cryptocurrency and CEO of the Pakistan Crypto Council (PCC), during the prestigious Bitcoin Vegas 2025 conference. According to sources, this moment marks a transformative shift in Pakistan's approach to digital assets and financial innovation. In a surprising diplomatic highlight, Bin Saqib extended special thanks to U.S. President Donald Trump, acknowledging his contributions to global crypto adoption and his behind-the-scenes efforts to help ease recent tensions between India and Pakistan. The event was also attended by U.S. Vice President JD Vance, Eric Trump, and Donald Trump Jr., underscoring the high-level international interest in Pakistan's digital finance ambitions. Bin Saqib highlighted Pakistan's strong foundation in the digital economy, revealing that the country now hosts over 40 million cryptocurrency wallets. This positions Pakistan among the world's most active digital finance participants, thanks largely to its massive freelance economy, rising digital literacy, and growing youth population. These factors, he noted, create the ideal conditions for the country to embrace a blockchain-driven future. One of the central initiatives unveiled during the event was the creation of a National Bitcoin Wallet—a digital infrastructure designed to store state-held crypto assets securely. This step reflects Pakistan's ambition to integrate digital currencies into its sovereign financial framework, making it one of the few countries in the region to take such a forward-looking measure. To support the technical backbone of this initiative, the Pakistani government has allocated 2,000 megawatts of surplus electricity for use in Bitcoin mining and AI-powered data centers. These facilities will not only cater to local tech enterprises but also invite foreign blockchain companies and independent miners to establish operations within Pakistan. This massive infrastructure move is expected to create thousands of jobs, boost foreign investment, and position Pakistan as a regional leader in blockchain computing. In line with these developments, Pakistan also announced the establishment of the Pakistan Digital Assets Authority—a regulatory institution responsible for overseeing all blockchain-based financial systems. The Authority will enforce transparency, provide legal protections, and offer clear regulatory guidelines to both local and international stakeholders. These sweeping reforms signal a paradigm shift in Pakistan's digital economic strategy. No longer content to remain on the sidelines, the country is now actively pursuing a leadership role in the global crypto landscape. With a clear vision, strong policy direction, and infrastructure investment, Pakistan's crypto revolution has officially begun. As Bilal Bin Saqib remarked, "This is not just about Bitcoin—it's about building a future economy that is decentralized, inclusive, and globally connected. Pakistan is ready to lead."

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## OIC and Arab league must turn words into action on Gaza crisis

THE ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza demands more than solemn declarations and symbolic gestures. As the world watches in horror, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League—two of the most prominent political bodies representing Muslim and Arab nations—must reckon with the inadequacy of their response. While both organizations have issued condemnations and called for ceasefires, the time has long passed for mere rhetoric. The suffering in Gaza demands decisive, coordinated, and sustained action. Since the escalation of violence began, thousands of Palestinians have been killed, tens of thousands injured, and entire neighborhoods reduced to rubble. Civilian infrastructure—hospitals, schools, places of worship—has been systematically destroyed. Israel's military operations, which it claims are targeted against Hamas, have inflicted disproportionate harm on the civilian population. Human rights organizations across the globe have raised alarm bells, yet the bombardment continues. The OIC and Arab League have convened multiple emergency summits and issued strong-worded statements decrying the violence and calling for the protection of Palestinian civilians. While these statements are important, they fall drastically short of the urgent diplomatic and political action needed. Many in the Arab and Muslim world are beginning to question the relevance and effectiveness of these institutions in moments of profound crisis. What is urgently needed is a shift from passive diplomacy to active engagement. First, the OIC and Arab League must leverage their collective political and economic influence on the global stage. This includes coordinated diplomatic pressure on Western allies of Israel, particularly the United States and European Union, to demand an immediate ceasefire and an end to the blockade of Gaza. Regional powers with direct channels to both Israel and Hamas must act as credible mediators, pushing toward negotiations that include guarantees for humanitarian aid, reconstruction, and long-term political solutions. Second, there must be tangible support for Gaza's beleaguered population. Financial pledges for reconstruction are necessary but insufficient if not followed through with effective delivery. The Arab League and OIC members should urgently organize humanitarian corridors, supply essential medical aid, and provide support to international NGOs working on the ground. It is time for these institutions to lead not just in condemnation but in relief. Finally, the crisis in Gaza cannot be divorced from the broader failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Arab League's 2002 peace initiative, which offered normalization in return for a two-state solution, remains on the table but has been sidelined in recent years. The OIC and Arab League must reignite serious efforts toward a just and lasting solution—one that guarantees the rights, dignity, and sovereignty of the Palestinian people. The people of Gaza are not only victims of bombs and blockades but also of global indifference and political inertia. The OIC and Arab League have a moral obligation and a historic responsibility to act—not tomorrow, not in the next summit, but now.

## More than trade on the agenda at GCC-ASEAN-China summit

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

Judging by the wide-ranging discussions taking place over several days and the lengthy statement issued after Tuesday's summit, the ambitions of the new gathering are quite high, especially for the first meeting of such a diverse group. It is, of course, the height of irony that China, the US' chief rival and adversary, is joining two blocs considered to be close American partners. The new grouping is a colossus and China is the superpower in this constellation. The combined populations of the 18 countries at the meeting exceeds 2 billion, or 25 percent of humanity. Their aggregated gross domestic product is more than \$24 trillion, close to 23 percent of the global economy.

KUALA Lumpur hosted a historic trilateral summit between China, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Chinese Premier Li Qiang and heads of state and government from the GCC and ASEAN states gathered, for the first time, to establish a new platform for cooperation. The political gathering is being followed by two days of economic summitry, in which business leaders are discussing trade and investment opportunities. If the recommendations adopted at the summit are fully implemented, there will be important strategic repercussions, with China playing a greater geopolitical role. Judging by the wide-ranging discussions taking place over several days and the lengthy statement issued after Tuesday's summit, the ambitions of the new gathering are quite high, especially for the first meeting of such a diverse group. It is, of course, the height of irony that China, the US' chief rival and adversary, is joining two blocs considered to be close American partners. The new grouping is a colossus and China is the superpower in this constellation. The combined populations of the 18 countries at the meeting exceeds 2 billion, or 25 percent of humanity. Their aggregated gross domestic product is more than \$24 trillion, close to 23 percent of the global economy. The potential for economies of scale and synergies between the countries is enormous. Some of that potential has already been realized. For example, China and ASEAN are the leading trading partners for each other. They signed a free trade agreement in 2002 and have recently wrapped up negotiations to update that deal. Last year, China-ASEAN two-way trade was worth close to \$1 trillion, accounting for about 29 percent of ASEAN's total trade. Similarly, China is the GCC's top trading partner, accounting for more than 20 percent of GCC trade. It is the destination of more than 25 percent of GCC petrochemical exports. The ambitions of the new gathering are quite high, especially for the first meeting of such a diverse group. Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg, or the need to adapt to the US trade war, may have been the trigger for some participants to come to these events. They aim to coordinate a response to new American tariffs, which have affected all the countries in attendance, and explore how to mitigate their effects by increasing access to new markets. The new policy of economic nationalism adopted by the Trump administration is making it difficult to continue to trade with the US, as this group-

ing's products become less competitive due to high import tariffs. By expanding trade through this trilateral setup, they hope to expand in other markets. There are other objectives. One is to restore some certainty to world markets, which have been jittery since the US imposed its new tariffs. The global economic outlook is being revised downward as well, with many organizations predicting slower growth in the coming years. For GCC countries, this is bad news, because their products thrive when the global economy is growing and suffer during recessions or slow-downs. Another objective is to restore faith in the multilateral system. While the US has expressed skepticism about the World Trade Organization and the global trading system generally, Tuesday's summit sought to rebuild trust. Using reassuring language, it stressed the need to "strengthen confidence in the rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core to protect businesses, consumers worldwide and the livelihoods of people in our regions." It also reaffirmed "the central and indispensable role of the World Trade Organization at the core of the rules-based multilateral trading system, which provides a predictable, transparent, nondiscriminatory and open global trading system." But the gathering is not only about economic cooperation. It is more strategic. The nine-page joint statement issued at the end of Tuesday's meeting covered a wide range of topics, including international and regional issues, proposals for three-way ASEAN-China-GCC energy security cooperation, fighting terrorism and coordinating foreign policy. For example, the summit adopted a fairly detailed and proactive set of recommendations on Gaza and the two-state solution. It is, of course, ironic that the US, which has played a singular role since the Second World War in advocating free trade and building the UN, the World Trade Organization and other fixtures of multilateralism, is now abandoning that system. On the other hand, developing countries, which in the past had their doubts, are now championing free trade. The participant sent thinly veiled messages to rogue states and countries flouting international law and norms. Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

While the US is retreating from multilateralism, China appears to be embracing it. The Kuala Lumpur meeting stressed that idea more than once through the final communique and interventions by heads of state and government. They also sent thinly veiled messages to rogue states and countries flouting international law and norms. The summit urged the promotion of "peace, security, stability and prosperity" through "mutual respect" and "adherence to international law, including the UN Charter," which means "good neighborliness" and respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of other states, as well as noninterference in their internal affairs. It also called for "refraining from the use of force, or the threat of use of force, and the settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means." These words and phrases were meant to address conflicts and disputes around the world by advocating a rules-based system centered on the UN. Another historical irony is that it was the US that pushed for the establishment of ASEAN in 1967 to help stop the spread of communism, which had taken hold in China, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The organization played a critical role in containing the spread of communism and Chinese influence and deepened the US' presence in Southeast Asia. Today, however, ASEAN includes communist governments among its member states. And although the bloc was meant to check China's growing influence, they have now become each other's top trading partner. Although the three groups (the GCC, ASEAN and China) are equal in the new trilateral setup, China is effectively the senior partner because of its population, GDP, military power and permanent membership in the UN Security Council. While the new grouping will bring China closer to the ASEAN and GCC, two blocs that are very close to the US, it would be a mistake to think that Beijing will "replace" the US as a security partner. What the ASEAN and GCC are doing is diversifying their strategic partnerships, while maintaining their close security partnership with the US. This diversification means that China may play a greater role in the security and stability of both the Gulf and Southeast Asia.

## A flight of Faith and Trust

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



And it happened before the eyes of thousands. This is the astonishing account of Amer Mahdi Mansour Gaddafi, a young Libyan pilgrim whose name is now known across the Islamic world. His story is not just about Hajj, nor merely about airline mishaps—it is about conviction, faith, and a personal relationship with the Divine. What is your relationship with Allah? That is the question his

In childhood, our grandmothers would gather us under the soft glow of lantern light and tell us stories—tales that were more than just entertainment. They were gentle lessons in morality and faith. One such story was of three friends trapped in a cave, with a rock sealing the entrance. In desperation, each prayed to Allah by mentioning a sincere, righteous deed they had done in life. One by one, their prayers were accepted, and the rock shifted—until they were free. These stories stayed with us, quietly embedding the belief that sincere faith, when coupled with righteous action, can move mountains—or even stones. But recently, an incident unfolded in Libya that seemed like one of those tales springing to life—except this time, it wasn't fiction. It was real. It was a miracle. And it happened before the eyes of thousands. This is the astonishing account of Amer Mahdi Mansour Gaddafi, a young Libyan pilgrim whose name is now known across the Islamic world. His story is not just about Hajj, nor merely about airline mishaps—it is about conviction, faith, and a personal relationship with Allah? That is the question his journey asks each of us. Al-Mahdi had been eager to perform Hajj, but when he reached Sabha Airport in Southern Libya, he was denied boarding due to a passport issue. The flight departed as scheduled, taking with its hundreds of hopeful pilgrims—but leaving one behind. Anyone else might have crumbled, protested, or returned home in despair. But Amir al-Mahdi remained where he was. He did not turn back. Again and again, he repeated, "I have made up my mind. I am going for Hajj, and I will go!" Others tried to comfort him. "The plane has gone, brother. Next year, In Shaa Allah." But he would

not hear it. "This plane will not leave without me," he declared, "It will return." And then, the first sign of Divine intervention; the plane, already in the sky, suffered a technical fault and returned to the airport. It was a chance, perhaps a miracle in motion. Yet, even as the plane was on the tarmac again, the crew refused to let him board. The technical issue was fixed, and the flight took off—without him. Once again. But Amir al-Mahdi did not waver. He remained, rooted by faith. "Obedience will not depart without me," he insisted. And lo—what can only be described as divine will intervened a second time. The plane, after taking off once more, encountered another technical issue and returned yet again. This time, the pilot made a historic declaration: "Until Amir al-Mahdi is on board, I will not fly the plane." And so, the man who had been rejected was now the key to the plane's journey. Videos of the moment he boarded went viral. His radiant face, wrapped in the white Ihram robe, was a testament not only to personal triumph, but to the immeasurable power of trust in Allah. The Quran says: "And whoever relies upon Allah – then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose." (Surah At-Talaq, 65:3) And another verse reminds us: "Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?" (Surah Az-Zumar, 39:36) This was a man who placed his entire reliance on the will of Allah, and he was answered in a way rarely seen in the modern world. Social media exploded with reactions. Some marveled at the miracle; others questioned the logistics. Someone wrote, "When a plane returns twice for you, this is not normal. You must have a special relationship with Allah." Another, wrote: "When intentions are pure and trust is sincere, miracles appear.

Allah is powerful over all things." A Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) beautifully complements this narrative: "Know that if the nation were to gather to benefit you with anything, it would only benefit you with something that Allah had already written for you. And if they were to gather to harm you with anything, they would only harm you with something Allah had already written against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried." (Tirmidhi) Indeed, what had been written for Amir al-Mahdi could not be altered by any immigration officer, flight manifest, or protocol. What Allah had willed, had to be. Upon reaching the sacred land, Al-Mahdi appeared in a video, now widely shared across the Muslim world. In it, he humbly says, "Alhamdulillah! I have reached the House of Allah." A soul full of gratitude, a heart triumphant in faith. Today, Amir al-Mahdi has become the most famous person in the Islamic world—not because he sought recognition, but because he sought Allah. And as the Quran proclaims: "You honor whom You will, and You humble whom You will. In Your Hand is all good. Indeed, You are over all things competent." (Surah Aale-Imran, 3:26) His story has brought to life those old tales our grandmothers once told us. Except this time, it wasn't three friends in a cave, nor a passenger miraculously spared from a crash. It was a pilgrim who believed that his Lord would never abandon him—and he was right. The plane did not depart without him, because the One who commands the skies had written something else entirely. The truth is that when a heart calls out in purity and the soul trusts completely, even the heavens must listen. For the One who halts a flying plane is the One who sees into hearts.



## Briefs

Pakistan  
keen to have  
connectivity  
with C. Asian..

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15 May 2025, the Prime Minister assured the shared commitment to its early operationalization. Regarding economic cooperation, the two leaders, acknowledging the untapped potential in bilateral trade, underscored the importance of actively pursuing new avenues of co-operation in line with the decisions taken during the 7th Session of Pakistan-Tajikistan Joint Commission on Trade, Economic and Scientific Technical Cooperation, held in Islamabad in December 2024. They also agreed to effectively leverage the existing institutional frameworks including twelve Joint Working Groups (JWGs), to further enhance collaboration between the two countries, especially in oil & gas and energy sectors. They took good note of growing bilateral cooperation in the field of defence & security and reiterated their resolve to further boost the same in order to overcome the common security challenges faced by the two countries.

PM for  
safer, more  
effective  
missions

FROM PAGE 01  
The prime minister, who is currently in Azerbaijan on the third leg of his four-country visit, called upon the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the policies of the United Nations in maintaining global peace and security, and to double efforts to adapt UN peacekeeping to meet these rapidly evolving challenges. He recalled that Pakistan and the Republic of Korea co-hosted the United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial meeting in Islamabad on April 15-16, 2025 with a theme "Towards a Safer and More Effective Peacekeeping: Leveraging Technology and Integrated Approaches." Stressing the need to strengthen the role and presence of UNMOGIP, he said that Pakistan also hosted the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), one of the oldest UN peacekeeping missions, mandated to monitor the ceasefire along the Line of Control in the UN-recognized disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Imran rejects  
dialogue  
path despite..

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influential power brokers to move ahead with government-level talks. Leaders aligned with Gandapur believed that any understanding with the government would carry the implicit endorsement of the establishment and could open doors for legal relief for Khan as well as a broader political normalisation. However, with the establishment firmly refusing to engage directly, attention has now turned to a delegation of US-based Pakistani doctors currently visiting Pakistan. Speculation is rife that informal backchannel efforts could be channelled through this group to help break the deadlock.

French  
envoy  
reaffirms...

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The French Ambassador assured full support from the government of France and AFD for Pakistan's development priorities. He reiterated France's commitment to working closely with the government of Pakistan to ensure the timely execution of ongoing projects and early approval of the proposed pipeline initiatives. Ambassador Galey reaffirmed that France values its longstanding partnership with Pakistan and will continue to collaborate in areas that promote inclusive development, climate resilience, and sustainable infrastructure. The minister appreciated the grant extended by AFD for water and sanitation projects in Lahore and Faisalabad. Both these projects are in pipeline, and he hope that it will be finalized soon.

Kundi lauds Armed Forces at  
exhibition Hockey match

The governor took a strong stance on recent national issues, saying that PSL was deliberately targeted and attempts were made to sabotage it. "Despite provocations, the world witnessed Pakistan's firm response to Indian aggression"

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, while speaking to the media at an exhibition hockey match organized to pay tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces, praised the national hockey team's preparations for the upcoming Nations Cup and expressed hope for the revival of sports across the province. "I appreciate the efforts of PHF President Tariq Bugti for revitalizing hockey in the country," the governor stated, adding that both federal and provincial governments must provide full support to the national sport. He reiterated the commitment to revive sports infrastructure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, asserting, "The grounds in KP will once again echo with the energy of youth and sports." The governor took a strong stance on recent national issues, saying that the Pakistan Super League (PSL) was deliberately targeted and attempts were made to sabotage it. "Despite provocations, the world witnessed Pakistan's firm response to Indian aggression," he said. Highlighting the role of Field Marshal Asim Munir, Governor Kundi said, "The COAS responded to hostile attacks, truly representing the spirit of the



nation. The entire Pakistani nation stands shoulder-to-shoulder with its armed forces." Touching on foreign policy, he mentioned that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the gov-

ernment's diplomatic efforts and visits to various countries were strengthening Pakistan's international relations. He also commented on India's defense posture, saying, "India was overconfident in

its Rafale jets and defense capabilities. Pakistan's decisive response will remain etched in their memory." Referring to alleged corruption in solar panel installations at mosques, he said, "Peaceful protests were held against corruption. Ironically, those who once claimed to stand against corruption are now responsible for suppressing dissent." He condemned the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's violent crackdown on peaceful protestors, stating that the federal interior ministry would register FIRs against those responsible. The governor also criticized the leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), noting, "From day one, PTI's founder has sought an NRO. Even today, no one in PTI knows who is really in charge." "Interestingly, PTI was the only political party absent from the ceremony honoring Field Marshal Asim Munir," he added. Praising the military and national heroes, he said, "We salute those who have defended our borders and our nation." Concluding his remarks, Governor Kundi emphasized the importance of competence in sports administration, saying, "People with no knowledge of sports should not be given key posts in sports federations. We must work together to revive and enrich Pakistan's sports culture."

Pak overpower BD by 37  
runs to win first T20I

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE, A strong bowling performance by Hasan Ali and an all-round show by Shadab Khan reduced Bangladesh to 164-10 in pursuit of 202 runs as Pakistan won the first T20I of the three-match series by 37 runs at the Gaddafi stadium here on Wednesday night. Returning to the national colours after a lapse of almost one year, Hasan Ali claimed the best bowling figures with a maiden fiver (5-30) in T20Is as bowled with pace, precision and used variations to his advantage. Hasan Ali, in the post-match conversation with presenter Zainab Abbas, thanked the PCB for his fully supporting him in his rehabilitation. Bangladesh had a similar start like Pakistan as they lost two wickets within the first power-play but a 63 runs partnership between Towhid Hridoy 17 (22) and captain Litton Das 48 (30) for the third wicket kept the Bangladesh tigers in contention but with the fall of Litton Das in the 12th over and the team total at 100 made the target an uphill task for the visitors. Opener Tanzid Hasan 31 (17) had played a blister-

ing knock at the top but he could not maintain the momentum and lost his wicket to a variation by Hasan Ali. He hit two boundaries and three 6s in his short stay at the crease. Litton Das and Towhid played contrasting innings but Litton fell for 48 in an effort to catch up with the required run-rate. He also hit three 6s. No other batter except Jaker Ali 36 (21) could face the consistent bowling by Pakistani bowlers and the whole team crumbled to 164-10 in 19.2 overs. Hasan Ali was the pick of the bowlers who claimed five wickets

for 30 runs in 13.2 overs while Shadab Khan picked a brace for 24 runs off his four overs. Faheem Ashraf, Salman Agha and Khushdil Shah picked one wicket each while Abrar Ahmed and Haris Rauf remained wicketless. Earlier, aggressive knocks from captain Salman Ali Agha 56 (34) and Hasan Nawaz 44 (22) took Pakistan out of trouble with a 65 runs partnership off 32 balls for the fourth wicket after they had lost both openers Saim Ayub 0 (1) and Fakhar Zaman 1 (4) by the second over with the team total at 5-2.

Mohammad Haris 31 (18) looked in good touch but fell in the seventh over with team total at 53-3. Salman Agha hit eight boundaries and six in his knock while Hasan Nawaz carried his form from the Pakistan Super League and hit two boundaries and four lofty 6s in his aggressive knock. Salman Ali Agha fell in the 12th over with total at 118-4. All-rounder Shadab Khan, when Pakistan needed the most, played an aggressive knock of 48 (25) laced with five boundaries and two 6s and helped to the take the team total beyond 200.



## Govt promoting sports: Muqam

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFFRON Engr Amir Muqam here Thursday said that Federal Government was promoting sports under the Prime Minister's Youth Program in order to raise Pakistani flag high internationally. He expressed these views while addressing an impressive function of Boxing trial Peshawar region for women under the Prime Minister's talent hunt youth sports league as a chief guest at Qayyum Sports Complex here. In his key note address, Engr Amir Muqam said that Pakistan has ruled over cricket, squash, hockey and snooker in world. He said the Prime Minister's talent hunt programme was aimed to encourage youth towards sports, education, vocational training and other socioeconomic fields. He said that hundreds of thousands of laptops were being handed over to the youth strictly on merit by the Federal and Punjab Governments. Engr Amir Muqam said that these laptops will help students in their studies and research work. The Federal Minister said that Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has achieved remarkable success in all fronts including economic and defense. He said Pakistan has given a powerful response to the enemy during operation Iron Wall and proved its superiority in air, land and sea battlefield. Engr Amir Muqam said that PMLN Govt of former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has made the country's defense impregnable by conducting six nuclear tests on May 28, 1998. He said that Pakistan was a peaceful country and our desire for peace should not be considered as weakness. He paid rich tributes to the armed forces Pakistan for defeating the enemy and inflicting heavy losses to the adversary during Maraka e Haq. Engr Amir Muqam said that Pakistan was our country and urged youth to work tirelessly in their selected professions to make it economically stronger. He said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif saved the country from a imminent economic default and put the economy back on track of development and prosperity. He said that nation has highest expectations from youth of Pakistan as they will shoulder its future responsibilities and make it forward. He congratulated the players and organizers of the boxing event and assured that genuine problems will be addressed on priority basis.—DNA

Alcaraz into French Open third  
round as Swiatek ,Sabalenka cruise

PARIS: Reigning champion Carlos Alcaraz overcame a minor blip to reach the French Open third round on Wednesday as women's title rivals Iga Swiatek and Aryna Sabalenka made short work of their opponents. Second seed Alcaraz came through 6-1, 4-6, 6-1, 6-2 against Hungarian Fabian Marozsan to earn his 17th win in 18 matches on clay this season. "Second set, he started to play better and he didn't miss a lot so it was a little bit difficult to deal with his game," said Alcaraz. "I'm really happy I stayed strong and refreshed myself. In the third set, I started to play better and better which helped me have a really good last two sets." Alcaraz, a four-time Grand Slam winner, goes on to face Bosnian journeyman Damir Dzumhur for a place in the last 16. In the women's draw, Swiatek continued her bid for a fourth straight Roland Garros crown as she outclassed fellow former US

Open champion Emma Raducanu. The Pole beat Raducanu 6-1, 6-2 to make it five wins in as many meetings with the Briton. She racked up her 23rd consecutive victory at Roland Garros to

improve her career record at the tournament to 37-2. Swiatek is bidding to become the first woman to win four consecutive French Open titles since Suzanne Lenglen 102 years ago.

The 23-year-old arrived in Paris under a slight cloud, having not reached a WTA final since lifting the Coupe Suzanne Lenglen last year, but has made serene progress through the first two



rounds. "Honestly, I just love playing here. This place inspires me and that makes me work harder," said Swiatek, who also captured the trophy as a teenager in 2020. The fifth seed will play Romania's Jaqueline Cristian for a place in the last 16. Swiatek's slide down the rankings has left her in the same half of the draw as world number one Sabalenka, last year's runner-up Jasmine Paolini and Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen. Sabalenka shook off a sluggish start to blow past Switzerland's Jil Teichmann. After dropping serve early in the first set, Sabalenka won 11 of the final 12 games to power to a 6-3, 6-1 win. "It doesn't matter what the scoreboard says, she really made me work for every point," said Sabalenka, who has conceded just five games through two rounds. The Belarusian has never reached the French Open final

and is hoping to banish the memories of a painful quarter-final loss to Mirra Andrejeva in 2024. Paolini moved into the third round as she brushed aside Ajla Tomljanovic 6-3, 6-3 to stretch her winning streak to eight matches following her triumph at the Italian Open. The fourth seed from Italy advances to play Ukraine's Yulia Starodubtseva. Zheng punched her ticket to the last 32 with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Colombia's Emiliana Arango. The Chinese star faces another Grand Slam debutant in the next round, 18-year-old Victoria Mboko of Canada. Other seeds to progress included former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, Elina Svitolina and Amanda Anisimova. Jelena Ostapenko, the 2017 French Open winner, rallied to win in three sets, but Russian 11th seed Diana Shnaider lost to Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska.—Agencies

Condolences pour  
in from Hockey  
community on passing  
of Parvez Kayani

RAWALPINDI: The hockey fraternity across Pakistan has expressed deep sorrow and condolences on the passing of Parvez Aslam Kayani, President of the Rawalpindi Hockey Association and a former international hockey player. President of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), Mir Tariq Hussain Bugti, and PHF Secretary General Olympian Rana Mujahid Ali Khan led the tributes, acknowledging Parvez Kayani's immense contributions to the sport both on and off the field. Several legendary Olympians and former international players, including Olympian Qasim Zia, Olympian Chaudhry Akhtar Rasool, Olympian Islahuddin, President Punjab Hockey Association Olympian Muhammad Asif Bajwa, Olympian Shahbaz Ahmed Sr., Olympian Khalid Hamid, Olympian Khawaja Junaid, Olympian Malik Shafqat, Olympian Shakeel Abbasi, Olympian Zeeshan Ashraf, Olympian Qamar Ibrahim, Olympian Sheikh Usman, Olympian Kamran Ashraf, Olympian Danish Kaleem, Olympian Anjum Saeed, and Olympian Sameer Hussain, also offered their heartfelt condolences. Notable former international players including Abuzar Umrao, Asif Khan, and Secretary of Balochistan Hockey Association Syed Ameen joined in mourning the loss, remembering Kayani as a passionate advocate for hockey who worked tirelessly for its promotion in Rawalpindi and beyond. The entire hockey community stands in solidarity with the bereaved family, offering prayers for the departed soul and strength to the family in this time of grief. — DNA

France gives air  
base \$1.7 billion  
nuclear facelift

LUXEUILLESBAINS, France: In a sign of the growing security nerves in Europe, France has embarked on a \$1.7 billion renovation of an air base in remote hills in the east of the country so it can handle nuclear-armed bombers. The work will take a decade but from 2035 the Luxeuil-Saint Sauveur base will be twice the size it is now and it will house new generation hypersonic missiles carried by 50 of France's Rafale fighter jets. President Emmanuel Macron announced at the base in March — on the day that US President Donald Trump and Russia's President Vladimir Putin discussed the Ukraine war — that it was to become the first to welcome the latest Rafale jets and France's ASN4G nuclear-capable air-to-ground missiles. Luxeuil will become the fourth, but most modern, base in France capable of storing nuclear weapons. The base currently has about 20 Mirage-2000 jets, which are no longer in production. Its triangle shaped hangars date from 1952, according to base commander, Colonel Emmanuel Roux. They have been "well used", according to Roux who said he had seen pictures of President Charles de Gaulle there in 1962. "It was the same," he joked. The hangars will go as the Rafales will not fit in them. "We will have to redo everything for the infrastructure," the colonel said. The Rafale is also heavier than the Mirage so Luxeuil's runway will also have to be made longer and tougher. — APP

Field  
Marshal says  
committed...

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members of Pakistan's academic community. As an acknowledgment of the critical role that academia plays in national progress, through innovation, research and in influencing perceptions, the forum brought together around 1800 members of the academic community, comprising Vice Chancellors, Heads of Departments, senior faculty members, principals and students from institutions across Pakistan; majority of whom participated in the Talks through virtual mediums. Special emphasis was on participation from southern districts in Balochistan, AJK and GB. While addressing the participants, the COAS encouraged the academia to play proactive role in promoting national narrative of harmony, stability, peace and progress. Emphasizing the need for critical thinking and imperatives of knowledge-driven economies, the COAS stated that our academic institutions must serve as centers for critical thinking, reasoning and organic innovative solutions for Pakistan's progress.

Budget to be  
presented  
on June 10

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the IMF will resume virtual talks today, where relief measures for the salaried class and industrial sector will be discussed. He noted that the date for the Annual Plan Coordination Committee (APCC) meeting remains undecided. He also stated that \$800 million in funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is expected to be approved on June 3. Earlier today, Finance Ministry sources indicated that the federal government could further delay the presentation of the Budget 2025-26 due to scheduling constraints posed by Eid holidays.

Security  
forces kill...

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During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location and after an intense fire exchange, four Indian sponsored terrorists were successfully neutralized. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from them. The killed Indian sponsored terrorists were actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, including heinous acts of terrorism on N-70 near Rarasham on 26 August 2024 and 18 February 2025, that resulted in martyrdom of thirty innocent civilians.

Pakistan  
enters...

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"I'm here as the voice of a generation — a generation that is online, on-chain, and unstoppable." Bilal, who also serves as the CEO of the Pakistan Crypto Council, revealed that the reserve would not be used for speculation or trading but would serve as a sovereign holding — signalling long-term commitment to blockchain-based finance.



## Briefs

## Protests in Nepal seeking restoration of ousted monarchy

KATHMANDU: Tens of thousands of protesters demanding the abolished monarchy be restored and the former king be made the head of state of the Himalayan nation demonstrated in Nepal Thursday. The protesters, waving flags and chanting slogans, demanded the return of the king and the restoration of Hinduism as a state religion as they marched through the main circle in the capital, Kathmandu. Just a few hundred meters (feet) from the pro-monarchy protesters, their opponents, who are supporters of the Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli, had gathered at the exhibition grounds to celebrate Republic Day. There was fear that these two groups could likely clash and create trouble in the city. Hundreds of riot police kept the two groups apart and authorities had given them permission on different times to take out their rallies. Nepal abolished the monarchy and turned the nation into a republic in 2008, bringing in a president as the head of the state. "Bring king back to the throne and save the country. We love our king more than our lives," the estimated 20,000 protesters chanted with a few playing traditional drums and musical instruments. —APP

## Erdogan urges Russia, Ukraine not to 'shut the door' on talks

ISTANBUL: Turkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called on Russia and Ukraine not to "shut the door" to dialogue ahead of an anticipated meeting between officials from both sides in Istanbul on Monday. "We are in contact with Russia and Ukraine.... We are telling them not to shut the door as long as it remains open," the Turkish presidency on Thursday quoted him as saying. Russia said Wednesday it wanted new talks with Ukraine in Istanbul next Monday to present its plan for a peace settlement, but Kyiv said it needed to see the proposal in advance for the meeting to yield results. "During the course of each of our meetings, we have reminded our interlocutors that they should not pass up this opportunity," Erdogan said, adding that: "extinguishing this huge fire in our region ... is a humanitarian duty." Turkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, who met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Monday, was expected to travel to Kyiv on Thursday ahead of a meeting with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky. Diplomatic efforts to end the three-year conflict have accelerated in recent months, but Moscow has repeatedly rejected calls for an unconditional ceasefire and shown no signs of scaling back its demands. The two sides previously met in Istanbul on May 16, their first direct talks in over three years. That encounter failed to yield a breakthrough. —APP

## Pak invites Japanese collaboration in minerals, value-added sectors

Japan, with its technological prowess and strategic industrial ambitions, is well-positioned to be a core partner in this transformative journey The shared vision expressed across JICA, JETRO, and JPBC forums reflects growing momentum toward

TOKYO: JAPAN: In a concerted diplomatic and economic outreach to Japan's public and private sectors, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal has invited Japanese collaboration in the country's underexplored mineral sector, with a strong emphasis on joint ventures in exploration, processing, and value addition. During a high-profile series of meetings in Tokyo with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), and the Japan-Pakistan Business Cooperation Committee (JPBCC), the minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fostering mutually beneficial partnerships anchored in sustainability, innovation, and economic integration, said a news release here on Thursday. Jam Kamal positioned Pakistan's vast reserves of rare earth elements, copper, gold, and other industrial minerals as a strategic domain for Japanese investment. He extended a strong invitation to Japanese companies to participate in exploration, modern processing technologies, and value-chain development, not only for the domestic market but also for export to third-country destinations by leveraging Pakistan's geostrategic



location. "Our mineral sector remains largely underexplored," he said. "We are offering Japanese partners the opportunity to participate in high-value ventures that can help build sustainable supply chains for critical minerals—an area aligned with Japan's global industrial needs." He highlighted that Pakistan is open to technology transfer, public-private partnerships, and investment frameworks that ensure mutual gain and long-term impact. Meanwhile, during a meeting with Sen-

ior Vice President of JICA HARA Shohei and officials from the South Asia Department, the minister underlined the importance of aligning future cooperation with Pakistan's national priorities—especially industrial modernization, workforce upskilling, and trade facilitation. JICA's ongoing contribution—amounting to \$11.7 billion over the years—was acknowledged, particularly in areas like transportation, energy, vocational training, and disaster resilience. The minister urged JICA to consider additional support for

industrial clusters and logistics corridors that can facilitate mineral exports and value-added production. He also called for expanded technical cooperation to build Pakistani capacity in modern industries, including digital innovation and green technologies, while highlighting reform efforts in taxation, energy, agriculture, and human capital development. Similarly, during a meeting with JETRO President Susumu Kataoka and Executive Vice President Kazuya Nakajo, the minister emphasized the critical role

JETRO plays in promoting trade and investment awareness between the two countries. He encouraged Japanese firms to actively explore investment opportunities in Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and value-added sectors including ICT, light engineering, and food processing. Specifically, Jam Kamal called on JETRO to promote Pakistan's mineral investment potential among Japanese industrial giants through targeted campaigns, seminars, and B2B engagements. He invited Japanese participation in Pakistan's flagship trade exhibitions organized by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), offering practical entry points for business collaboration. "The mineral sector is a goldmine of opportunity for Japan," the minister noted. "Through our SEZs, modern infrastructure, and policy incentives, we are ready to support Japanese investors every step of the way. Meanwhile, at a luncheon hosted by the Japan-Pakistan Business Cooperation Committee (JPBCC), the minister praised the Committee's long-standing role in building robust business-to-business linkages. —DNA

## Rupee gains 11 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Thursday appreciated by 11 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.06 against the previous day's closing of Rs 282.17. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 282.65 and Rs 284.30, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 2.06 to close at Rs 318.10 against the last day's closing of Rs 320.16, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 02 paise and closed at Rs 1.94, whereas a decrease of Rs 2.02 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 379.81 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 381.83. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 03 paise each to close at Rs 76.79 and Rs 75.20, respectively. —APP

## Iran may pause uranium enrichment

DUBAI: Iran may pause uranium enrichment if the US releases frozen Iranian funds and recognises Tehran's right to refine uranium for civilian use under a "political deal" that could lead to a broader nuclear accord, two Iranian official sources said. The sources, close to the negotiating team, said on Wednesday a "political understanding with the United States could be reached soon" if Washington accepted Tehran's conditions. One of the sources said the matter "has not been discussed yet" during the talks with the United States. The sources told Reuters that under this arrangement, Tehran would halt uranium enrichment for a year, ship part of its highly enriched stock abroad or convert it into fuel plates for civilian nuclear purposes. A temporary pause to enrichment would be a way to overcome an impasse over clashing red lines after five rounds of talks between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff to resolve a decades-long dispute over Tehran's nuclear programme. US officials have repeatedly said that any new nuclear deal with Iran — to replace a failed 2015 accord between Tehran and six world powers — must include a commitment to scrap enrichment, viewed as a potential pathway to developing nuclear bombs. The Islamic Republic has repeatedly denied such intentions, saying it wants nuclear energy only for civilian purposes, and has publicly rejected Washington's demand to scrap enrichment as an attack on its national sovereignty. In Washington, a US official told Reuters the proposal aired by the Iranian sources had not been brought to the negotiating table to date. The US State Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment on this article. Iran's semi-official Fars news agency said Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei denied Reuters report and said "enrichment in Iran is a non-negotiable principle". The Iranian sources said Tehran would not agree to dismantling of its nuclear programme or infrastructure or sealing of its nuclear installations as demanded by US President Donald Trump's administration. —APP

## Thousands storm aid warehouse in Gaza as hunger crisis deepens

DEIR EL-BALAH, Palestinian Territories: Thousands of desperate Palestinians stormed a United Nations warehouse in central Gaza on Wednesday, with the World Food Programme reporting two possible deaths in the tumult as Israel and the UN traded blame over the deepening hunger crisis. The humanitarian situation in Gaza, where aid has finally begun to trickle in after a two-month blockade, is dire following 18 months of devastating war. Food security experts say starvation is looming for one in five people. AFP footage showed crowds of Palestinians breaking into a WFP warehouse in Deir El-Balah and taking bags of emergency food supplies as gunshots rang out. "Hordes of hungry people broke into WFP's Al-Ghafari warehouse in Deir El-Balah, Central Gaza, in search of food supplies that were pre-positioned for distribution," WFP said in a statement on X. "Initial reports indicate two people died and several were injured in the tragic incident," WFP said, adding that it was still confirming details. Israel accused the United Nations Wednesday of seeking to block Gaza aid distribution, as the global body said it was doing its utmost to facilitate distribution of the limited assistance greenlit by Israel's authorities. The issue of aid has come sharply into focus amid starvation fears and intense criticism of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), a private US-backed aid group that has bypassed the longstanding UN-led system in the territory. Israel's UN ambassador Danny Danon told the Security Council that aid was entering Gaza by truck — under limited authorization by Israel at the Kerem Shalom crossing — and via a "new distribution mechanism developed in coordination with the US and key international partners." Danon was referring to the GHF operation, which he accused the UN of "trying to block," saying it was "using threats, intimidation and retaliation against NGOs that choose to participate in the new humanitarian mechanism." The UN said 47 people were injured Tuesday when thousands of Palestinians rushed a GHF site. A Palestinian medical source reported at least one death. Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, reiterated the world body's opposition to coordinating with GHF. "We will not participate in operations that do not meet our humanitarian principles," Dujarric said. He said the UN was doing all it could to send aid, adding that since last week 800 truckloads were approved by Israel but fewer than 500 made it into Gaza. —DNA

## EU chief calls for 'independent Europe' amid global turmoil

AACHEN: EU chief Ursula von der Leyen called for a "truly independent Europe" at a time of seismic change on the world stage, as she received the International Charlemagne Prize on Thursday. Accepting the award in the German city of Aachen, she urged "a new form of Pax Europaea for the 21st century, one that is shaped and managed by Europe itself." The International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen has been awarded since 1950 to individuals or institutions that have made outstanding contributions to Europe and European unification. "What we once relied on as an international order has rapidly descended into an international disorder," von der Leyen said. She pointed to Russia's invasion of Ukraine that shattered old certainties after decades in which the US-led NATO alliance had "led to a form of complacency among us". "We thought we could rely on a peace dividend," she said about the post-Cold War era when European defence spending dropped off. "But these times are over," she said, warning that "the world is again marked by imperial ambitions and imperial wars". "Adversaries of our open democratic societies have rearmend and remobilised," she said. "There is no greater example of that than (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's brutal and ruthless war against Ukraine." Pointing to moves by the EU and member states to pour hundreds of billions of euros into defence spending, she said "times are changing — and Europe with it". "We are doing this to put everything into defending peace," said the European Commission chief. "A new international order will emerge in this decade. If we do not want to simply accept the consequences this will have for Europe and the world, we must shape this new order." She added that "history does not forgive either dithering or delaying. Our mission is European independence." German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who took office in early May, vowed at the awards ceremony that "Germany is committed to this strong, united Europe". —APP

## Pervaiz reviews PSO's performance, supply chain resilience

DNA

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, accompanied by Mr. Zafar Abbas, Additional Secretary Petroleum, Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), Director/ Deputy Secretary Waqas Ahmed Barlas, visited Pakistan State Oil (PSO) House as part of a strategic outreach to key stakeholders in the petroleum sector. They were received by Chairman of the PSO Board of Management, Mr. Asif Baig Mohamed, and Mr. Abdus Sami, Chief Supply Chain Officer and current officiating the Managing Director's office, PSO, along with senior members of the PSO leadership team. During the visit, the Federal Minister held a series of high-level meetings aimed at strengthening coordination and ensuring operational excellence across the sector. The Minister engaged with PSO's top management to review the company's performance,



supply chain resilience, and automation initiatives. He appreciated PSO for its pivotal role in ensuring a consistent and reliable supply of fuel across the country and the company's ongoing efforts to modernize its infrastructure and diversify its business model, particularly its forward-looking expansion into renewable energy and emerging segments of the energy market. Mr. Malik also met with representatives of the

Oil Companies Advisory Committee (OCAC), including Syed Nazir Abbas Zaidi, Secretary General, OCAC, members: i. e. Mr Zubair Shaikh, CEO, Wafi Energy Pakistan, Mr Zahid Mir, MD Pakistan Refinery Limited and Mr Abdus Sami, Chief Supply Chain Officer, PSO. The discussions focused on key industry-wide challenges, regulatory developments, and the need for greater policy alignment to ensure a stable and efficient energy supply chain.

In a separate session, the Minister met with a delegation from the Petroleum Dealers Association, led by Chairman Mr. Abdus Sami Khan, where matters related to dealers' operational challenges and profit margins were brought to the table. The Minister assured the dealers that their concerns would be duly considered and addressed through constructive dialogue. —APP

## Asia: The influence of the US and China

MAHNOOR ALI KHAN

## INTRODUCTION

South Asia is a region of immense cultural, historical, and geopolitical complexity. Home to modern-day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, it lies at the crossroads of Asia, with critical trade routes connecting the continent to Europe and Africa. Though countries like Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka are also part of the region, this article focuses on the central geopolitical triad. South Asia is marked by its religious diversity—home to Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and more—and by its vast range of languages and landscapes. It is also a region still grappling with the long-term

consequences of British colonization, such as the Kashmir conflict and enduring political instability. **Strategic Importance and Internal Challenges** With a population exceeding 1.5 billion, South Asia faces developmental hurdles including resource management, economic inequality, and geopolitical friction. India is the dominant power, asserting itself as a major global player. At the same time, Pakistan plays a critical role in shaping the regional balance—both through its strategic partnerships and its position in global counterterrorism efforts. Pakistan faces complex internal and external challenges: economic instability, security concerns, and managing relations with both the US and

China. These dynamics are deeply influenced by the evolving global rivalry between the two superpowers. **China's Expanding Role** China's rise has significantly impacted South Asia, especially Pakistan. Through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has invested billions in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), enhancing infrastructure and energy access. For Pakistan, this partnership promises economic revitalization and strategic support. However, it also raises concerns about debt dependency and sovereignty over long-term projects. Beyond economics, China's military presence and border tensions with India have implications for Pakistan. With Beijing and Islamabad enjoying close diplomatic and

military ties, their strategic alignment is often perceived as a counterbalance to the growing India-US partnership. This triangle—India, China, Pakistan—further complicates regional security dynamics. The United States and Its Shifting Focus The United States has historically maintained a strong presence in South Asia, particularly in Afghanistan and through its growing relationship with India. While once a key ally of Pakistan, especially during the Cold War and early phases of the War on Terror, US-Pakistan relations have cooled in recent years. Nevertheless, the US remains a major donor and trade partner for Pakistan, with continued engagement in education, health, and counterterrorism.

The shift in American focus toward India, however, places Pakistan in a delicate position—trying to maintain its relevance in a changing diplomatic landscape while avoiding alienation from either side. **Implications of the US-China Rivalry for Pakistan** For Pakistan, the intensifying US-China rivalry presents both opportunities and risks. On one hand, strong ties with China ensure continued investment and strategic support. On the other, a growing India-US alliance may marginalize Pakistan's regional influence if not managed carefully. This rivalry also limits Pakistan's diplomatic space. Aligning too closely with one power could hinder relations with the other. Moreover, increased militarization and naval com-

petition in the Indian Ocean could destabilize regional trade and security, directly affecting Pakistan's economic and geopolitical interests. Pakistan's policymakers face the challenge of leveraging Chinese investment while cautiously engaging with the West. A balanced foreign policy could allow Pakistan to act as a mediator or bridge between competing powers, enhancing its regional relevance. **Conclusion** South Asia's trajectory is heavily influenced by the actions of external powers—most notably the United States and China. Their competition for influence, investment, and military presence shapes the decisions of regional actors, especially Pakistan, which sits at the crossroads of this rivalry.

For Pakistan, strategic alignment with China offers significant benefits, but comes with responsibilities and risks. At the same time, maintaining productive ties with the US and other Western powers is essential for long-term economic stability and international legitimacy. The region must walk a careful path. Constructive cooperation between external and regional powers could foster development, stability, and prosperity. Conversely, unchecked competition risks deepening divisions and igniting conflicts. The choices made today by South Asian nations—and their global partners—will determine whether the region becomes a zone of opportunity or a theater of conflict.



## Briefs

COVID cases  
resurface  
across the  
country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Renowned infectious diseases expert Dr. Faisal Mehmood on Thursday warned that COVID-19 is once again spreading across the country. While talking to a private news channel, he said that the virus is now generally seen as a mild viral infection, and he advised the public to remain cautious and follow basic preventive measures to stay safe. He said that patients arriving at hospitals generally have mild symptoms such as fever, cough, cold, body aches, and, in some cases, difficulty breathing. Dr. Faisal urged the public to take precautionary measures, including wearing masks in crowded places and washing hands thoroughly with soap. He advised that anyone experiencing a worsening fever or cough should get tested immediately. Dow Hospital is receiving 8 to 10 patients daily with symptoms of COVID-19, while more than 50 patients suffering from respiratory illnesses are reporting to the emergency rooms at Jinnah and Civil Hospitals, he added.

Police cop  
martyred  
in Bannu

DNA

PESHAWAR: A police personnel was martyred and four citizens were injured as a result of a gunfire between the public, police and terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district on Thursday. Spokesperson to the regional police officer, Khanzala Qurashi, said, "The members of the peace committee, along with police personnel, were patrolling the area when they were attacked by terrorists at around 12:30am." He said that police personnel, Murtaza Jan, embraced martyrdom, while a school teacher, a police constable, and four people were injured in the attack. "The incident took place within the limits of the Hoya Police Station" he said, adding that the "terrorists fled the scene due to the quick response from the police."

Govt mulls  
operation in  
Tira valley

## MONITORING REPORT

KHYBER: Consultations and deliberations started both in Bara and Tirah among various stakeholders after they were conveyed a message about possible military operation during an official meeting on May 27 (Tuesday). Held at Khyber House and chaired by Peshawar Commissioner Riaz Mehsud, the meeting was also attended by regional security officials, deputy commissioner of Khyber, DPO and elders from Tirah and Bara along with elected representatives. Sources told Dawn that commissioner conveyed to the participants of the meeting the government's resolve about 'decisive' military operation against various terrorist groups presently holed up in some localities of Shalobar and Zakhakhel areas in Tirah valley.

Sri Lanka ex-minister  
jailed in corruption  
case

NEWS DESK

COLOMBO: A Sri Lankan court on Thursday sentenced two former ministers from the government of deposed president Gotabaya Rajapaksa to decades in prison in a landmark corruption case. Ex-sports minister Mahindananda Aluthgamage and former trade minister Anil Fernando were found guilty by the Colombo High Court of misappropriating 53 million rupees (\$177,000) of state funds. The pair were also fined \$2,000 for using government money to donate board games.

Portugal, Pak bridge nations  
with spiritual musical journey

Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, remarked, "At Serena Hotels, we believe in the power of cultural diplomacy; Ambassador of Portugal shared, "This collaboration is a celebration of the shared cultural values of Portugal and Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, in collaboration with the Embassy of Portugal hosted Soulful Strings: Portugal & Pakistan a great musical journey that brought together two remarkable traditions through the universal language of music. The evening featured a mesmerizing performance by celebrated Portuguese classical guitarist Pedro J6ia and renowned Pakistani musician Arieab Azhar, who captivated the audience with a soulful fusion of Portuguese guitar melodies and the spiritual depth of Sufi verse. This artistic collaboration highlighted the richness of both cultures and offered a profound, meditative experience to all in attendance. The event was graced by members of the diplomatic community, along with distinguished representatives from the corporate sector and media personalities, all gathered to celebrate the power of music as a bridge

between nations. Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, remarked, "At Serena Hotels, we believe in the power of cultural diplomacy to create meaningful connections between people and nations. Soulful Strings reflects our commitment to encouraging dialogue and harmony through art and music". H.E. the Ambassador of Portugal shared, "This collaboration is a celebration of the shared cultural values of Portugal and Pakistan. Music is a profound medium that transcends borders, and this event is evidence to the continuing friendship and mutual appreciation between our two countries." As a part of Serena Hotels ongoing Cultural Diplomacy initiative, the event reaffirmed the organization's dedication to promoting intercultural understanding, creative expression, and people-to-people connectivity. Soulful Strings stands as a tribute to the harmony that can be achieved when diverse artistic traditions come together with a shared purpose.



## Atrocities in Gaza

Pakistan urges UNSC to act,  
not to remain by stander

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Noting that the United Nations General Assembly will hold a Conference in June on the two-State Solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Pakistan has urged the UN Security Council not to remain a bystander while Palestinians were being slaughtered, maimed and starved. "The cries from Gaza cannot continue to be met with silence- the world cannot afford another day of inaction," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 15-member Council on Wednesday. "History will not absolve us of our responsibility," he said during a debate in the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Conference in the 193-member Assembly will take place at the UN headquarters in New York from June 17 to 20, to be co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and France. "The sense around the table is clear. The urgent asks are so evident: Ceasefire, release of hostages, humanitarian action and protection of innocent civilians. This is doable," the Pakistani envoy said in a moving presentation. "We call on all Council members to come together, to act, through a resolution, to promote the objective - in the immediate term, and to help create an environment conducive

to the June Conference, and towards a just and lasting settlement for the Palestinian question."

He added, "The time for equivocation is over. There is no justification whatsoever for the human suffering of the Palestinian people. Yes, enough is enough."

"How many more atrocities must be committed before this Council does what is right - morally, legally, and under the UN Charter. Words of concern are no longer enough."

"The time to act, time to prevent genocide, is now." Ambassador Asim said, "We must not allow the Israeli atrocities to be normalized - for that would be an affront to international law and human dignity."

He said that the unfolding crisis was a man-made catastrophe driven by Israel's prolonged blockade, indiscriminate bombardment, and attacks on civilians, noting that over 54,000 Palestinians-mostly women and children-have been killed, and more than 122,000 injured. The Pakistani envoy described the trauma inflicted on Gaza's population as "beyond measure, beyond imagination." In this regard, he said over 800 medical facilities have been attacked, with hospitals operating without essential supplies and even targeting of ambulances and medical workers. With at least 57 children already dead from hunger, Ambassador Asim said that starvation is no longer a threat but a grim reality, with humanitarian convoys blocked or attacked.

US 'reins in India'  
over regional  
provocations,  
urges restraint

THE United States has once again restrained India's aggressive posture following its recent provocations towards Pakistan, with diplomatic sources confirming that Washington urged New Delhi to uphold regional peace and stability during talks this week. Development came when Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri called on US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau in Washington. According to the sources, the US has made it clear to India in a blunt manner that regional stability and peace should be maintained. India struck a blow to regional stability and peace on May 6 when India attacked Pakistan by baselessly accusing it of killing tourists in the Pahalgam region of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Exercising the right to self-defence, Pakistan responded to this aggression with a crushing response, shooting down five Indian aircraft, including four Rafales and a drone, destroying the S-400 defence system, and attacking all the military bases from which India had launched missiles at Pakistan and targeted civilians. After these attacks, a ceasefire was established between Pakistan and India through US efforts, which still holds. However, provocations continue from the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. Modi recently said that Pakistanis should eat bread; otherwise, my bullets are always there. Following these attacks, Misri is on a three-day visit to the United States from May 27. On Wednesday evening, he met the US deputy secretary of state in Washington. US State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said that in this meeting that Landau committed to continuing the close partnership between the United States and India. India should refrain from any kind of aggression: US However, according to the sources, at the same time, the US has also expressed its desire to India to maintain regional peace and stability. That is, it has made it clear to India that it should refrain from any kind of aggression. - Agencies

US trade court  
blocks tariffs  
in major  
setback  
for Trump

WASHINGTON: A US federal court on Wednesday blocked most of Donald Trump's sweeping import tariffs from going into effect, ruling that the president had overstepped his authority with the across-the-board global levies.

The opinion marks a significant setback to the Republican leader as he bids to redraw the US trading relationship with the world by forcing governments to the negotiating table through tough new levies. Trump's global trade war has roiled financial markets with a stop-start rollout of levies that are aimed at punishing economies that sell more to the United States than they buy. But the three-judge Court of International Trade effectively called a ceasefire, barring most of the restrictions that the president has announced since taking office.

The White House slammed the ruling, arguing that "unelected judges" have no right to weigh in on Trump's actions to address what the administration frames as a "national emergency." "President Trump pledged to put America first, and the administration is committed to using every lever of executive power to address this crisis and restore American greatness," said Trump's spokesman Kush Desai. The statement did not mention any legal challenge, although multiple US outlets said the Trump administration had already filed an appeal. - Agencies

DPM Dar in  
Hong Kong  
for signing  
of IOMed

HONG KONG: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday arrived here for the signing ceremony of the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed). Deputy Secretary for Justice for Hong Kong Dr. Cheung Kwok-kwan, Ambassador of Pakistan to China Khalid Hashmi, and Consul General of Pakistan to Hong Kong Riaz Ahmed Sheikh received the deputy prime minister at the airport in Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of China. During the two-day visit, DPM Dar will also hold several bilateral engagements on the sidelines of the signing ceremony. - DNA

Elon Musk  
leaving Trump  
administration

Musk did not have formal conversation with Trump before announcing his exit, says a source with knowledge

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Billionaire Tesla CEO Elon Musk is leaving the Trump administration after leading a tumultuous efficiency drive, during which he upended several federal agencies, but ultimately failed to deliver the generational savings he had sought. His "off-boarding" will begin tonight," a White House official told Reuters late Wednesday, confirming Musk's departure from government. Musk earlier on Wednesday took to his social media platform X to thank President Donald Trump as his time as a special government employee with the Department of Government Efficiency draws to an end. His departure was quick and unceremonious. He did not have a formal conversation with Trump before announcing his exit, according to a source with knowledge of the matter, who added that his departure was decided "at a senior staff level." While the precise circumstances of his exit were not immediately clear, he leaves a day after criticising Trump's marquee tax bill, calling it too expensive and a measure that



would undermine his work with the US DOGE Service. Some senior White House officials, including Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, were particularly irked by those comments, and the White House was forced to call Republican senators to reiterate Trump's support for the package, a source familiar with the matter said. While Musk remains

close to the president, his exit comes after a gradual, but steady slide in standing. After Trump's inauguration, the billionaire quickly emerged as a powerful force in Trump's orbit: hyper-visible, unapologetically brash and unfettered by traditional norms. At the Conservative Political Action Conference in February, he brandished a red metallic chainsaw to wild cheers. "This is the chainsaw for bureaucracy," he declared. On the campaign trail, Musk had said DOGE would be able to cut at least \$2 trillion in federal spending. He did not hide his animus for the federal workforce, and he predicted that revoking "the Covid-era privilege" of telework would trigger "a wave of voluntary terminations that we welcome". But some cabinet members who initially embraced Musk's outsider energy grew wary of his tactics, sources said. Over time, they grew more confident pushing back against his job cuts, encouraged by Trump's reminder in early March that staffing decisions rested with department secretaries, not with Musk.

DPM for renewed commitment  
to adapt UN Peacekeeping

Pakistan joined the international community in recognizing the dedication, courage, and service of the UN peacekeepers, who continue to serve with dedication and courage in many parts of the world for the maintenance of international peace and security

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: As the world observes the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on Thursday, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar stressed the need for renewed political commitment to adapt UN Peacekeeping to address contemporary and future challenges, including through technological innovation, and strengthening regional partnerships. The deputy prime minister, in his message on the Day, said that Pakistan joined the international community in recognizing the dedication, courage, and service of the UN peacekeepers, who continue to serve with dedication and courage in many parts of the world for the maintenance of international peace and security. He said that the Day was also an important reminder to honour the ultimate sacrifice made by many UN peacekeepers in their line of duty, including 181 brave peacekeepers from Pakistan. "Over the years, Pakistan has remained a leading Troops Contributing Country (TCC), with over 235,000 Pakistani peacekeepers, both men and women, serving with distinction in many parts of the world. Pakistan is also host to one

of the oldest UN peacekeeping Missions - the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)," he said. The deputy prime minister said that the recent developments in the region reinforced the need for further strengthening the presence and role of UNMOGIP, along with a just resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. "At a time when the world is facing multifaceted threats, the UN Peacekeeping remains one of the most reliable and cost-effective instruments for maintaining international peace and security." DPM Dar recalled that Pakistan, along with the Republic of Korea, co-hosted the Third United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Preparatory Meeting on April 15-16, 2025, in Islamabad, under the theme "Towards a Safer and More Effective Peacekeeping: Use of Technology and Integrated Approach." The outcomes of the meeting have been instrumental in helping create a new momentum towards achieving this end. He reiterated that Pakistan had been and would continue to uphold its strong commitment towards UN Peacekeeping as a vital tool for a peaceful, stable, and prosperous world.

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