



Islamabad POST

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Asia-Pacific must build shared resilience says ADB President

Detailed News On Page-08

Pakistan values relations with Norway: Dar

Detailed News On Page-08



Nation will not forget sacrifices

Detailed News On Page-08



Middle East issue

Indian nationals injured as Iranian missiles hit UAE

UAE intercepts missiles fired from Iran as emergency warnings issued; a cargo ship caught fire off the UAE coast on Monday, with the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center announcing the ship had caught fire

NEWS DESK / DNA

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates said on Monday its air defense systems had responded to four missiles fired from Iran, with its Ministry of Defense confirming three of them had been intercepted while a fourth fell into the sea. As many as three Indian nationals were injured in Iranian missile attacks. The UAE's eastern emirate of Fujairah also said an Iranian drone sparked a fire at an oil facility. Fujairah is the terminus of a pipeline the UAE has used to avoid shipping some of its oil through the Strait of Hormuz amid the Iran war. A cargo ship caught fire off the UAE coast on Monday, with the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center announcing the ship had caught fire, adding it was in the vessel's engine room. It confirmed the ship's crew was accounted for. UAE authorities issued a series of fresh mobile phone alerts on Monday warning residents of missile threats. The alerts urged residents to "immediately seek a safe place in the closest secure building." A defense ministry statement on X added: "The sounds heard in scattered areas of the country are

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Briefs

India's Modi celebrates record 'win'

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed a "record" victory on Monday in key elections in opposition-held West Bengal state after official trends and partial results showed a thumping majority for his Hindu nationalist party. Votes were still being counted under tight security in the state of more than 100 million people, one of five states and territories that held elections in April and May where results were also being announced on Monday. The results should put Modi on a stronger footing while he battles a series of economic and foreign policy challenges, including high unemployment rates and a pending US trade deal, ahead of a general election in 2029.

Pak Navy assists Indian crew

NAZIR SYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Navy has launched a humanitarian rescue operation in the Arabian Sea to assist a distressed merchant vessel, security sources said on Monday. Pakistan Navy personnel are providing emergency assistance to six Indian and one Indonesian crew member aboard the MV Gautam, the security sources said, adding that the vessel was sailing from Oman to India when it developed a technical fault at sea. They said that the Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Mumbai contacted Pakistani authorities for assistance after the incident. Following the emergency request, the Pakistan Navy deployed a ship of the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency named PNS Kashmir to carry out the rescue operation.

DPM Dar talks to Iran's Araghchi

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has told his Iranian counterpart that dialogue and diplomacy are the only paths towards stability as US war against Tehran continues to disrupt the global economy. Negotiations between the two countries have been deadlocked since a ceasefire came into effect on April 8, and Iran's blockade of the strategic Strait of Hormuz following US-Israeli attacks on Tehran has been a main point of contention. By blocking the Strait of Hormuz, Iran has choked off major flows of oil, gas and fertiliser to the world economy, while the United States has imposed a counter-blockade on Iranian ports. In a statement, the Foreign Office said that the Dar, who is also the foreign minister, held a telephonic conversation late last night with the Foreign Minister of Iran, Abbas Araghchi. The Foreign Office men-

tioned that their discussion focused on the regional situation and Pakistan's ongoing diplomatic efforts for peace and stability in the region. While Araghchi appreciated Pakistan for the constructive role and sincere mediation efforts, DPM Dar reaffirmed Islamabad's continued commitment to promoting constructive engagement. He also underscored that dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable path toward peaceful resolution of issues and achieving lasting peace and stability in the region and beyond. Meanwhile, Iran's foreign ministry has said Tehran had submitted a 14-point plan "focused on ending the war" and that Washington had already responded to it in a message to Pakistani mediators, which Iran was reviewing. Pakistan has emerged as a key mediator between US and Iran, with highest-level talks between the two sides taking place last month in Islamabad. A second round is yet to take place as talks have hit a snag.

One Constitution Avenue Buyers have no ownership rights

The dispute concerns a 2005 lease agreement between the CDA and BNP for the development of a five-star hotel. The BNP converted it to a residential project – namely, One Constitution Avenue, a high-end residential and commercial project located in a prime area of the federal capital

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday issued a detailed judgment in the One Constitution Avenue case, upholding the cancellation of the lease of the multi-billion-rupee project. It ruled that buyers of luxury apartments in the development do not have ownership rights and may instead pursue legal remedies against the builder for recovery of their investment. In a detailed judgment, IHC Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar dismissed a set of petitions filed by M/s BNP (Pvt) Limited – the developer of the project – along with investors and other stakeholders, challenging the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) decision to terminate the lease. The court held that the impugned action was in accordance with law and consistent

with the framework laid down earlier by the Supreme Court (SC). In the case, leading lawyers, including former SC judge Ijazul Ahsan, represented the BNP, while advocate Kashif Ali Malik represented the CDA. The dispute concerns a 2005 lease agreement between the CDA and BNP for the development of a five-star hotel. The BNP converted it to a residential project – namely, One Constitution Avenue, a high-end residential and commercial project located in a prime area of the federal capital. The lease was initially terminated in 2016 but later restored by the SC in January 2019, subject to stringent financial conditions. These included payments of Rs17.5 billion within eight years through structured instalments backed by bank guarantees, and a stipulation that termination could only take place in case of default after issuance of a 30-day notice.

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Imran Khan, Bushra's pleas seeking suspension of sentences rejected

An accountability court in Islamabad had sentenced Imran and Bushra to 14 and seven years in prison, respectively, on Jan 17, 2025, in the case. Subsequently, both had challenged their convictions before the IHC

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Monday rejected the petitions of former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi seeking the suspension of their sentences in the £190 million corruption case, observing that their main appeals were already fixed for hearing. A two-member bench headed by Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar will take up the central appeals on May 7. In view of this, the court declared the suspension applications infructuous. During the hearing on April 30, Justice Dogar had emphasised that the best course would be an early disposal of the main appeal. Imran – imprisoned since Aug 5, 2023, for concealing details of Toshakhana gifts – is serving a 14-year sentence at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail in the £190m case, also known as the Al-Qadir Trust case. An accountability court in Islamabad had sentenced Imran and Bushra to 14 and seven years in prison, respectively, on Jan 17, 2025, in the case. Subsequently, both had challenged their convictions before the IHC. The case alleges that the couple obtained billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town Ltd to legalise Rs50 billion identified and returned to the country by the United Kingdom during the PTI government.

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf Saeed Al-Maliki welcomed the Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, Mr./Mustafa Kamal. During the meeting, there was a pleasant conversation and an exchange of views on matters of mutual interest. – DNA

Sufficient fuel stock, says Dar

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a high-level meeting to review the country's petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) stock position. The Petroleum Ministry briefed the committee on the prevailing supply situation, confirming that, after factoring in incoming shipments, sufficient stock levels are available to ensure uninterrupted availability of POL products throughout Pakistan until the third week of June 2026. The Committee was further informed that the supply situation is being continuously monitored on a daily basis through the National Coordination and Management Committee (NCMC) to ensure effective oversight and proactive supply chain management.

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Security lapse at parliament lodges

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Senate Deputy Chairman Syedal Khan Nasar on Monday took notice of security lapses and poor facilities at the Parliament Lodges, summoning the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and security officials and ordering a comprehensive report within three days. Parliament Lodges house members of the National Assembly and Senate in the capital. Security and maintenance issues have been a recurring issue at the lodges. Chairing an emergency meeting at Parliament House, Nasar expressed displeasure over

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Pakistan FO says

Crew members on Iranian ship seized by US evacuated to Pak

"Six other passengers were already transferred to a regional country for repatriation last week," he said. According to the report, Iranian state media identified the six as family members of some of the crew

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) said on Monday that as a "confidence-building measure" by the United States, 22 crew members on an Iranian ship that was seized by US forces had been evacuated to Pakistan. The statement came hours after American outlet ABC News reported that an Iranian ship seized by the US after it "failed to comply" with the blockade imposed by the country on Iranian ports had been transferred to Pakistan for repatriation. "US forces completed the transfer of 22 crew members of M/V Touseka to Pakistan for repatriation," the report quoted US Central Command Spokesperson Captain Tim Hawkins as saying. "Six other passengers were already transferred to a regional country for repatriation last week," he said.


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Iran attacks US ships; Centcom denies

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran attacked two US ships violating Iranian guidelines in the Strait of Hormuz, with missiles. Iran had warned on Monday that it would consider any US attempt to interfere in the Strait of Hormuz a breach of the Mideast ceasefire, as President Donald Trump said the United States would begin escorting ships through the blocked waterway. Negotiations between the two countries have been deadlocked since a



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Stable policies to attract Chinese green investments

ISLAMABAD: Experts at a policy consultation said that Pakistan must undertake structural reforms, ensure policy consistency, and offer competitive incentives to attract Chinese private sector investment, particularly in emerging sectors such as renewable energy, electric vehicles (EVs), and green manufacturing. The consultation on "How Pakistan can Compete for China's Green Manufacturing FDI", was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here Monday. Speaking on the occasion, Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director, Pakistan-China Institute, said that while China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had made significant progress through Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs), future growth depended on attracting Chinese private sector firms relocating abroad. Rooftop solarization offers a viable entry point for such engagement, he said and suggested that Pakistan must compete with ASEAN economies like Vietnam and Malaysia, which provided better infrastructure, streamlined procedures and investor-friendly policies. He called for joint planning with Chinese investors, provision of subsidized land,

tax holidays and duty exemptions on imported machinery, along with an effective one-window facilitation system. Xiaokang Xue, Researcher at the Net Zero Industrial Policy Lab, Johns Hopkins University, highlighted a surge in Chinese overseas investments in clean technology manufacturing, particularly in ASEAN and Central Asia. He said host countries must ensure market access, raw material availability and long-term policy clarity to attract such investments. He added that Pakistan has potential in solar and EV sectors but must offer fiscal incentives comparable to countries like Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia. Prof. Stella Hong Zhang, Assistant Professor, International Studies, Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, Indiana University Bloomington, compared ASEAN and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) models, stating that ASEAN countries have successfully integrated into global manufacturing through strong industrial policies, SEZs, and export-oriented strategies. Engr. Ubaid ur Rehman Zia, Head of Energy Unit at SDPI, highlighted that Pakistan's energy partnership with China was entering a new phase, moving beyond the traditional sovereign

guarantee-based model established under the CPEC. While earlier engagement was driven by large-scale, state-led investments financed through sovereign-backed debt, there is now a visible shift towards more commercially oriented and diversified models, he said. Increasingly, he maintained, Chinese energy engagement is being shaped by equity participation, joint ventures, and private sector actors alongside growing demand for decentralized and cost-effective energy solutions in Pakistan's industrial sector. This evolving landscape, he said, underscores the need to better understand how investment structures, risk-sharing mechanisms, and emerging business models are transforming bilateral energy cooperation. Dr Hassan Daud Butt, Senior Advisor, China Energy Engineering Group, said global investment patterns are shifting toward "friend-shoring" and "near-shoring," where stability and trust outweigh cost advantages. He stressed that Pakistan must develop reliable, cost-efficient, and green energy ecosystems to remain competitive. He noted that future foreign investment would focus on energy-efficient technologies.—DNA

Seven flights canceled at Lahore airport

LAHORE: A total of seven domestic and international flights had been canceled while several flights had been delayed at the Allama Iqbal International Airport. According to airport sources, Air Blue flight PA-410 from Lahore to Dubai and PA-411 from Dubai to Lahore were canceled. Similarly, FlyDubai flight FZ-359 from Dubai to Lahore and FZ-360 from Lahore to Dubai were also affected. Sources further informed that Saudi Arabian Airlines flight SV-732 from Jeddah to Lahore and SV-733 from Lahore to Jeddah were also canceled. Similarly, Fly Jinnah flight 9P-842 from Karachi to Lahore could not operate due to affected operations. On the other hand, Fly Dubai flight 9P-500 to Sharjah was delayed by about 8 hours and 15 minutes, while Air Blue flight PA-412 to Sharjah departed one and a half hours late. Similarly, flight KE-582 to Bishkek was also delayed by one and a half hours. According to the airport administration, reasons for the delay and cancellation are technical issues, however, steps are being taken to provide convenience to the passengers.—APP

Hindu community celebrates Marka e Haq

LARKANA: Under the leadership of Dr. Rakesh Motiyani, Founder Chairman of Pakistan Hindu Society, the Hindu community is celebrating the "Battle of Truth" festivals continues till May 09th in Larkana and across the Sindh Province. Founder Chairman of Pakistan Hindu Society, Dr. Rakesh Motiyani, stated that the Hindu community is celebrating the "Battle of Truth" festival, in which tributes are being paid to the Pakistan Army and Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir for their outstanding performance against India. Hindu communities are taking out large rallies, and Hindu communities are participating in these rallies.—APP

Community centres opened at Buner

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control, Syed Fakhar Jehan, formally inaugurated community centres (hujras) at three different locations in Parshalai area of constituency PK-26 Buner. These public welfare projects have been completed through the Provincial Minister's development fund. The Minister attended the inauguration ceremonies as chief guest and, along with local elders, formally opened the facilities by cutting the ribbon. On the occasion, Ahmad Khan (brother of PTI Chairman and Member National Assembly Barrister Gohar Ali

Khan) and district leaders including Bakhrad Khan, Waqar-ul-Mulk Khan, Qaisar Ali Advocate, Irshad Alam, and other PTI leaders were also present. Addressing the gathering, Syed Fakhar Jehan said that community hujras are an integral part of local culture and social harmony, serving as important platforms for public consultation, dispute resolution, and community engagement. He added that the provincial government is prioritizing public welfare initiatives that directly benefit the people and strengthen the social fabric at the grassroots level. Local elders appreciated the performance

of the Provincial Minister and stated that Syed Fakhar Jehan is the first elected representative in the area's history who is committed to ensuring equal development across all villages of PK-26. They also expressed gratitude for these culturally significant public projects. Meanwhile, the Provincial Minister, accompanied by local leadership, visited the villages of Annawar, Nari Tangi and Ghohdara, where he met local elders, notables, and party workers, and listened to their issues. He directed the concerned authorities to ensure prompt resolution of these problems.—APP

Rescue 1122 responds to 833 emergencies over last month

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Rescue 1122 Lakki Marwat has released its performance report for April 2026, highlighting its response to hundreds of emergencies and efforts to save valuable lives during the past month. According to a Rescue 1122 spokesperson, the report was compiled under the directives of Director General Rescue 1122 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Fahad and Director Operations South Region Arif Khattak and under the supervision of District Emergency Officer Bilal Afridi. The report states that a total of 13,587 calls were received during April, including 6,738 fake calls and 6,016 informational calls. It shows that rescue teams responded to 833 emergencies, including 665 medical cases, 91 road traffic accidents, 8 fire incidents, 30 cases of fights and gunshot injuries, and 34 recovery operations. Rescue personnel provided first aid and shifted 798 patients safely to hospitals. However, 25 individuals succumbed to their injuries at the scene. The report further highlights the performance regarding referral service, which responded to 214 emergencies and facilitated the transfer of 229 patients. Among them, 37 patients were shifted within the district from one tehsil to another, while 177 patients were transferred from one district to another.—APP

Section 144 imposed at Hub River

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has enforced Section 144 at Hub River, banning swimming and all recreational activities in the area. The decision follows a tragic incident on Sunday, in which three people drowned. According to an official notification issued by the Home Department, the order prohibits bathing, swimming, and leisure activities within the river's limits. Entry into dangerous spots along the riverbanks has also been strictly restricted. The ban is effective immediately and will remain in force for 60 days, though authorities may extend or amend it depending on circumstances. Violators will face legal action under Section 188 of the Pakistan Penal Code and other relevant laws. The Home Department has directed the Deputy Commissioner of Hub, police, and law enforcement agencies to ensure strict implementation of the order. Officials emphasized that protecting human lives is the government's top priority, and all necessary measures will be taken to safeguard the public.—DNA

NGC completes 9 major transmission projects

DNA

LAHORE: The National Grid Company of Pakistan (NGC) has successfully completed nine major power transmission projects over the last six months. Key achievements since November 2025 include the completion of two new grid stations, 500kV Lahore North and 220kV Quaid-e-Azam Business Park, which have significantly enhanced power transmission capacity from southern to northern regions of the country, while also enabling electricity supply to a Special Economic Zone in Punjab. During this period, the upgradation of six autotransformers (ranging from 160 MVA to 250 MVA) at Nokhar, Okara, Yousafwala and Hyderabad grid stations has also been completed. These upgrades have

substantially increased system capacity and reduced load shedding. Additionally, the interconnection of Ghazi Barotha-Gatti transmission line with 500kV Allama Iqbal Industrial City (AIIC) grid station in Faisalabad has been completed. Other significant projects include the completion of Nowshera Transmission Line and 55-kilometer-long 220kV Faisalabad West-Lalian transmission line, both of which are now ready for energization. Meanwhile, several grid station and transmission line projects across the country are in their final stages of completion. After assuming office in November 2025, Managing Director NGC, Engr. Altaf Hussain Malik, made the timely completion of transmission projects his top priority. He conducted extensive visits across Punjab, Sindh and Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, where he directly engaged with field teams and reviewed the progress of ongoing projects in detail. Engr. Altaf Hussain Malik appreciated the efforts of NGC teams on the successful completion of these projects, commending their hard work, effective coordination and strict adherence to safety standards. He also emphasized the timely completion of key ongoing projects, including the 765 kV grid stations at Islamabad West and Mansehra, as well as the Dasu transmission line. Expressing full confidence in NGC teams, he directed them to maintain the same pace and dedication and to continue strengthening Pakistan's transmission system through enhanced collaboration, focused execution and professional excellence.



LAHORE: Austrian Ambassador, Wolfgang Oliver Kutschera, alongside senior representatives of ANDRITZ Hydro (Austria) met with the Chairman of National Grid company. DNA

KP CM opens digital license management system

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister (CM), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi on Monday inaugurated the Digital License Management System, marking a significant step towards digitization of public services in the province. Speaking at the ceremony, the CM said that under the digital licensing system, the issuance of driving licenses has been made fully digital. He said that digitization of services would not only facilitate citizens but also ensure merit and transparency in service delivery. He termed the initiative an important milestone in the provincial government's reform agenda. — APP

Pak cannot be harmed, armed forces fully capable

HYDERABAD: Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) MPA Engineer Sabir Hussain Qaimkhani has said that enemies of Pakistan should realize they cannot harm the country, as its people and armed forces are fully capable of defending the homeland. Talking to APP on the anniversary of "Marka-e-Haq" he said Pakistan's armed forces had given a strong and effective response to Indian aggression, demonstrating the country's strength and national spirit to the world. He said that since its creation, Pakistan had faced numerous challenges, and during this period In-

dia repeatedly attempted to pressure and destabilize the country, a stance openly reflected in the speeches of its leaders. He added that Pakistan had faced Indian aggression on several occasions, but described 2025 as a particularly significant year in this regard. Referring to the Pahalgam incident, he said that India used it as a pretext to initiate anti-Pakistan conspiracies and carried out unjustified aggression, to which Pakistan responded with full force in defense of its sovereignty. Qaimkhani paid tribute to Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir as well as the leadership and per-

sonnel of the Air Force, Navy and the people of Pakistan, who responded to Indian aggression with national unity and sent a clear message to the world that the Pakistani nation cannot be defeated easily. Sabir Qaimkhani said that political differences may exist among parties but their ultimate goal was a strong and stable Pakistan where citizens can live peacefully. He added that this remains their mission, which was also the vision of the country's founding leadership, that Pakistan would not only emerge as a dignified nation on the global stage but would also play a leading role in the Muslim world. — APP

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E-PAD NOTICE
CIVIL WORKS

Tenders in favour of Cantonment Board Officer, Attock Cantt are invited from PEC registered contractors in appropriate category having valid upto date registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), for execution of following original works out of grant-in-aid:-

S/N	Description of Work	Est. Cost Rs. (M)	Earnest Money 5% (Rs)	Cost of Bidding Documents (Rs)	PPRA E-Pad 2.0 Code
1.	Provision of Sewerage line / Drainage system and PCC Streets In Muhalla Noor Al Islam Attock Cantt	7.000	350000	3000	P27809
2.	Provision of Sewerage line / Drainage system and PCC Streets In Younas Street Attock Cantt	2.090	104500	2000	P27812
3.	Provision of Sewerage line / Drainage system and PCC Streets In Khoi Street Attock Cantt	2.470	123500	2000	P27821
4.	Provision of Sewerage line / Drainage system and PCC Streets In Qadeemi Masjid Street Attock Cantt	1.140	57000	1500	P27824
5.	Provision of Sewerage line / Drainage system and PCC Streets In Madrassa Haqani Attock Cantt	1.510	75500	1500	P27827
6.	Provision of Sewerage line / Drainage system and PCC Streets In Qazi Madrassa Street Attock Cantt	2.000	100000	2000	P27830
7.	Provision of Sewerage line / Drainage system and PCC Streets In Mandar Street Attock Cantt	3.790	189500	4000	P27833

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Tender documents instruction and specification can be viewed / download from E-PAD.
- The Contractor shall submit 5% bid security of the estimated cost sealed in envelope in the shape of call deposit (original) by hand or through courier shall reach before closing date & time otherwise tender will not be entertained.
- The tenders can only be submitted in electronic format through E-PAD portal from date of publication in newspaper and portal, the deadline for submission of tender is 20/05/2026 at 1200hrstenders would be opened on the same day at 1330hrs in the presence of contractor or their authorized representatives.
- "Single stage one envelope E-PAD system will be adopted / followed" method of procurement / work / tendering will be adopted as envisaged in PPRA rules.
- No manual tender shall be entertained.
- Any information / bidding documents regarding the E-PAD can be obtained from the office of the Cantonment Board Attock during office hours.
- The validity of Tender / Quotation rates shall be minimum upto 60 days as per PPRA / PEC Rules.
- The Cantonment Board reserves the rights of demanding the analysis of the quoted rates from the concerned tenderer to check their responsibility and workability.
- In case if the lowest tendered rate is less than reasonable rates the lowest tenderer shall have to deposit standing security (refundable after successful completion of the work) @10% of estimated cost in the shape of Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) within 07 days. In case of failure the already deposited 5% earnest money shall be forfeited and the same shall be offered to 2nd lowest participant as per rules.
- The quantum of work may increase / decrease as per PPRA Rules and lowest tenderer shall be bound to execute the work on similar rates / terms & conditions.
- Bidding documents will be issued keeping in view the relevant PEC's Category, criteria and job specification.
- Rates should be quoted on the basis of MES Schedule of Rates 2021 (amended upto date) for schedule items and market rates for non-schedule items.
- Conditional / incomplete tenders / quotation wherein necessary details are missing will not be accepted.
- Works will be executed as per availability of funds.
- The issuance of work orders shall be subject to approval of from CFA / release of grant.
- Successful tenderer will be bound to deposit mandatory dues as already resolved by the Board and shall have to execute an agreement (at their own cost) on non-judicial stamp paper of appropriate value for faithful execution of the contract.
- The Cantonment Board / Executive Officer reserves the right to reject all tenderers as per PPRA's Rules No. 33 (1) due to any reason thereof.
- In case of any further queries, please contact 057-9316154 from 0800hrs to 1600hrs.

(Samreen Agha)
Cantonment Executive Officer, Attock Cantt.

PID08847/25

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

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
DhQ Hospital...9270907-11
CHT.....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
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

OIC-COMSTECH, WUACD academic forum begins

Deputy Head of Mission of Indonesia in Pakistan Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma underscored the importance of academic collaboration in strengthening bilateral relations



SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The OIC-COMSTECH in collaboration with the World Universities Association for Community Development (WUACD) on Monday inaugurated an academic leaders forum at the COMSTECH Secretariat in Islamabad, alongside the establishment of a joint secretariat aimed at promoting academic cooperation among member institutions. A 13-member international delegation representing WUACD-affiliated universities from the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Australia is participating in the forum. The event seeks to strengthen academic collaboration, explore joint research opportunities, expand fellowship programmes, and address emerging challenges in higher education, science, and technology. Speaking at the inaugural session, Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH, Prof Dr M. Iqbal Choudhary, highlighted the significance of the forum, describing it as a vital platform for enhancing linkages among universities across OIC member states. He noted that

in an era marked by uncertainty, misinformation, and rapid global change, universities must play a central role in community development and in preparing graduates to meet future challenges. He emphasised that strengthened collaboration between COMSTECH and WUACD would open new avenues for academic exchange, research partnerships, and capacity building across member countries. WUACD Executive Secretary Prof Dr Ni Nyoman Tri Puspansih, while introducing the organisation, outlined plans for expanded cooperation between WUACD and COMSTECH. She expressed confidence that the partnership would create meaningful opportunities for institutions across OIC countries and contribute to sustainable academic and community development. In his remarks president of WUACD and Rector of Universitas Airlangga Prof. Dr. Muhammad Madyan, appreciated the collaboration between OIC-COMSTECH and WUACD, terming it a significant step towards strengthening academic linkages across OIC member states. He said the partnership would serve as a gateway for

enhanced cooperation among universities, particularly within the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence, facilitating joint research, academic exchange, and capacity-building initiatives. He further noted that a series of international conferences and workshops focusing on community development are planned under this platform. Deputy Head of Mission of Indonesia in Pakistan Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma underscored the importance of academic collaboration in strengthening bilateral relations. He described COMSTECH as a trusted partner of the Indonesian Embassy and highlighted ongoing academic exchanges, including fellowship programmes for Pakistani students in Indonesia. He added that educational cooperation remains a key pillar of economic diplomacy and people-to-people connectivity between the two countries. Dr. Shahid Mehmud honorary adviser COMSTECH, said the next era would be driven by artificial intelligence, bringing transformative changes across sectors. He emphasised that community development would remain essential to ensure inclusive progress. He added that

collaboration between COMSTECH and WUACD would help align technological advancement with the needs of OIC member states. Representatives of leading Pakistani universities, including vice chancellors and rectors, engaged with the international delegation to explore avenues for mutual cooperation. The newly inaugurated secretariat is expected to serve as a coordination hub for joint initiatives, research collaboration, and academic exchange programmes. In the later sessions of the forum, discussions focused on repositioning universities for research and development excellence, innovation, commercialisation, and global collaboration. Participants from local universities presented proposals on potential areas of cooperation, followed by an open discussion on bilateral and multilateral partnerships. The forum concluded with closing remarks and a networking session aimed at strengthening institutional linkages. Ambassadors and diplomats from Yemen, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Tajikistan attended the ceremony, along with researchers, faculty members, and academic leaders from across Pakistan.

Islamabad still leads high-stakes diplomacy in US-Iran standoff

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Masood Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China, and Permanent Representative to the United Nations on Monday reaffirmed that Pakistan continues to play a vital and credible role as a facilitator in the evolving U.S.-Iran negotiations, dismissing claims that its diplomatic relevance has diminished. In a TV interview, he observed that the current phase of the crisis is not only defined by military escalation but also by unprecedented global awareness of diplomacy in action. "This conflict has brought diplomacy into public view,

where citizens across the world are observing in real time how states engage, negotiate, and maneuver," he remarked. Clarifying recent statements by U.S. President Donald Trump, Ambassador Khan emphasized that they have been widely misinterpreted. "There is no indication that Pakistan has been sidelined. On the contrary, proximity talks—where parties engage indirectly through a trusted intermediary—are ongoing, and Pakistan is playing that intermediary role effectively," he stated. He explained that Pakistan is facilitating the exchange of proposals between Washington and Tehran while attempting to bridge critical differences under highly complex conditions. "This is a continuous and delicate process, requiring both sides

to consolidate internal positions and move toward a workable consensus," he added. Highlighting the core impediment to progress, Ambassador Khan stressed that trust cannot be restored without simultaneous steps to ease tensions, particularly the U.S. blockade measures and issues surrounding the Strait of Hormuz. He noted that Iran has demonstrated some flexibility, but Washington continues to apply pressure to shape the outcome of negotiations. Assessing the broader strategic landscape, he observed that both sides have incurred significant costs. Iran, despite suffering extensive damage and leadership losses, has maintained operational coherence and avoided internal collapse.

Unity, peace stressed at Istehkam-e-Pakistan conference

RAWALPINDI: A strong message of national unity, peace and institutional harmony was delivered at the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Conference titled 'Maarka-e-Haq, Bunyan-un-Marsoos' held here on Monday, where speakers reaffirmed collective resolve to safeguard Pakistan's stability, sovereignty and ideological foundations. Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khair Azad, in his address said that national unity and cohesion were the only way to tackle challenges facing the country, while paying tribute to the sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces in the fight against terrorism. He said the entire nation stood united with its armed forces and would foil every conspiracy against the country through collective resolve and awareness. The conference was attended by Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Engineer Aamir Khattak, Regional Police Officer Babar Sarfraz Alpa, religious scholars, traders, civil society representatives and members of different faiths. Abdul Khair Azad said Pakistan was a constitutional state where rule of law, justice and protection of citizens' rights were fundamental principles. He said terrorism, unrest and anti-state activities had no place in society. He stressed the need to promote peace, tolerance and interfaith harmony, calling it a shared responsibility of all segments of society. He said any attempt to spread division and chaos would be countered with unity by the nation, scholars and all stakeholders. Referring to operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, he said it reflected national solidarity and sent a clear message to the world that Pakistanis were committed to safeguarding their sovereignty and dignity. He also highlighted the importance of resolving global conflicts through dialogue, saying peace and mutual understanding were the only viable solutions to international disputes. Khair while presenting tribute to valour armed forces and the military leadership highlighted the courageous role played by Field Marshal Asim Munir and PM Shehbaz Sharif in establishing unity and responding to Indian unprovoked attacks in befitting manner. He further lauded the initiatives taken by CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif for promoting interfaith harmony. Commissioner Engr. Aamir Khattak said all institutions in Rawalpindi Division were working in coordination to maintain law and order, with peace committees and stakeholders playing an active role.—DNA

Chairman Senate, Kazakhstan envoy discuss bilateral coop

Ambassador Kistafin appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in advancing regional peace and connectivity and expressed Kazakhstan's keenness to expand cooperation with Pakistan across multiple sectors

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin, called on Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, at the Parliament House today. Welcoming the Ambassador, the Chairman Senate commended his active contribution to strengthening Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to its longstanding and cordial ties with Kazakhstan, grounded in mutual respect, shared values, and a common vision for regional peace and prosperity. The two sides held comprehensive discussions on matters of mutual interest, including political and parliamentary cooperation, trade and economic collaboration, and regional connectivity. The Chairman Senate termed the recent State Visit of H.E. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to Pakistan a landmark development that has elevated bilateral relations to the

level of a Strategic Partnership. Highlighting the importance of parliamentary diplomacy, the Chairman Senate underscored the need to strengthen

institutional linkages between the legislatures of both countries. He called for regular high-level exchanges and the reactivation of parliamentary friendship

groups to foster greater engagement and exchange of best practices. On economic cooperation, the Chairman Senate noted positive momentum in bi-

lateral trade, particularly in the agriculture sector. He emphasized enhanced connectivity, including the establishment of direct air links, to facilitate trade, tourism, and people-to-people contacts. Regional cooperation also featured prominently in the discussions. The Chairman Senate reiterated Pakistan's resolve to promote regional market access and support initiatives aimed at strengthening inter-regional linkages, noting that peace and stability remain essential prerequisites for sustainable economic growth. Ambassador Kistafin appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in advancing regional peace and connectivity and expressed Kazakhstan's keenness to expand cooperation with Pakistan across multiple sectors. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the positive trajectory of bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening cooperation through sustained dialogue and engagement at all levels.



Rehabilitated Leopard 'Terry' returns to habitat successfully

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Wildlife Department and the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) successfully rehabilitated and released a Common Leopard, affectionately named "Terry," back into his natural habitat. The mission began on April 5, 2026, when the AJK Wildlife Department rescued the injured leopard from the wild, said a press release. Recognizing the urgency of specialized care, the animal was transferred to IWMB rescue and rehabilitation center, where Terry underwent 27 days of intensive veterinary treatment, monitoring, and rehabilitation. On May 2, 2026, following a full recovery and assessment of his fitness for survival, Terry was successfully released back into the wild, marking a significant milestone in ongoing conservation efforts. Chairperson IWMB emphasized that the ultimate goal of wildlife conservation is to ensure that wild animals thrive in their natural habitats.—APP

Police organize women's awareness lecture on rights

ISLAMABAD: Superintendent of Police (SP) City Zone Dr Ayaz Hussain, SDPO Kohsar Noshewan Ahsan Minhas and SHO Women Police Station Misbah Shehbaz organized an awareness lecture for women at the Women Welfare and Development Centre in the federal capital. An official told APP on Monday that the session aimed to educate women about social protection, legal rights and challenges faced in daily life. Police officers guided participants on the importance of being aware of their rights and seeking timely assistance in difficult situations.—APP

Briefs

IRSA releases
137,400
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 137,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 132,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1461.74 feet which was 61.74 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 43,600 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1161.25 feet, which was 111.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 37,200 cusecs and 36,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 91,500, 65,800, 50,100, and 12,600 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 33,900 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 9,700 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Musadik meets
Chinese green
finance expert

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik on Monday met Ma Jun, President of the Institute of Finance and Sustainability, China, to discuss cooperation in green finance and sustainable development initiatives. During the meeting, Ma Jun briefed the minister on China's Green Accelerator Programme, launched in 2016 with 35 policy recommendations under a unified framework. He said China had since developed the world's largest green financing mechanism, valued at around \$7 trillion. He noted that China currently produces nearly 70 per cent of the world's wind and solar energy equipment and about 60pc of global electric vehicles, highlighting the scale of its clean energy ecosystem. Ma Jun said the Green Accelerator initiative aimed at developing bankable green projects by integrating technology, finance, carbon markets and project design, enabling scalable and commercially viable climate solutions.—APP

CPO orders to
arrest culprits

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani on Monday took notice of the reported torture of a 13-year-old maid in the Rawat area and ordered immediate legal action against those involved. According to a police spokesman, the CPO directed the Superintendent of Police (Sadar) to submit a detailed report and ensure the arrest of all suspects without delay. Police said a case has been registered at Rawat police station on the complaint of the state. One of the suspects involved in the alleged torture incident has been arrested, along with the parents of the minor girl. Officials said the injured child was provided medical treatment and is currently under care. She is being handed over to the Child Protection Department for further safety and welfare.—APP

IMCG I-10/4
celebrates
Silver Jubilee
with grandeur

ISLAMABAD: Government Model College for Girls I-10/4 celebrated its Silver Jubilee, marking 25 years of excellence in education and character building. The event brought together distinguished guests, former principals, alumni, and students. Heartfelt tributes were paid to the institution's visionary leaders. Former principals Prof Saba faisal Prof Fozia mujahid Prof Samra latif and other graced the stage and addressed the gathering, sharing reflections on their tenures. Prof. Fatima Mobeen, Principal IMCG, I 10/4, expressed profound gratitude to all the guests for their passion and dedication towards the institute and vowed to carry on the journey of excellence with greater zeal and zest. The event culminated with a lavish lunch.—DNA

APJCCI, DG TDAP discusses
Pak–Azerbaijan trade promotion

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari proposed that APJCCI and TDAP may jointly organize a Pakistan Single Country Exhibition or Made in Pakistan Expo in Baku to showcase Pakistani products and services



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Patron-in-Chief of the Azerbaijan–Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry (APJCCI), along with Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General United Business Group (UBG) and Chairman APJCCI, called on Mr. Abdul Salam Shah, newly appointed Director General, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Islamabad, and congratulated him on assuming his new responsibilities. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Azerbaijan is an emerging and promising market for Pakistani exporters, and there is a need to convert the excellent diplomatic relations between the two countries into meaningful trade and investment outcomes. He proposed that APJCCI

and TDAP may jointly organize a Pakistan Single Country Exhibition or Made in Pakistan Expo in Baku to showcase Pakistani products and services. He said that such an exhibition could provide a practical platform for Pakistani exporters to explore business opportunities in Azerbaijan and connect directly with buyers, distributors, and relevant business organizations. Ahsan informed to the Director General TDAP that APJCCI has already organized two business delegations to Azerbaijan, which were self-sponsored by the private sector. He requested TDAP's support for the upcoming business delegation to Azerbaijan, adding that official facilitation would encourage greater participation from serious exporters and investors. He further emphasized that Pakistani businessmen are keen to learn more about trade opportunities in Azerbaijan. In this regard,

he proposed that a Commercial Councillor or Trade Officer may be appointed in Azerbaijan at the earliest to provide market intelligence, trade data, regulatory guidance, and business matchmaking support to Pakistani companies. He stated that high-value and export-oriented products should be considered for inclusion in the Pakistan–Azerbaijan Preferential Trade Agreement framework, as this would create greater opportunities for Pakistani exporters and help increase bilateral trade volume. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Abdul Salam Shah appreciated the proposals and advised APJCCI to submit formal recommendations for holding an exhibition in Azerbaijan. He stated that TDAP prepares its annual calendar of events and exhibitions, and proposals relating to Azerbaijan could be examined for possible inclusion in TDAP's future trade promotion activ-

ities. He also encouraged APJCCI to send concrete proposals for increasing trade and economic activity between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He said that TDAP is ready to facilitate meaningful initiatives that can help exporters explore new markets and increase Pakistan's export footprint. He said that a list of Pakistani products that have export potential in Azerbaijan shall be shared with APJCCI, so that the business community can focus on realistic and high-potential opportunities. The meeting also discussed opportunities for increasing Pakistan's exports to African markets, particularly in nutraceuticals, skincare products, and related value-added sectors. It was noted that while these products have potential, market entry and distribution in African countries require proper strategy, local partners, and institutional support.

Freedom of Press rally
highlights it's importance

The Department of Mass Communication at Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST), Islamabad, organized a "Freedom of Press" rally to mark World Press Freedom Day, underscoring the significance of independent and responsible journalism

ISLAMABAD: The Department of Mass Communication at Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST), Islamabad, organized a "Freedom of Press" rally to mark World Press Freedom Day, underscoring the significance of independent and responsible journalism. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Zabta Khan Shinwari led the rally, while Vice Chancellor of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Peshawar, Prof. Dr Safia, attended as the chief guest. Chairman of the department, Dr Faisal Javed, Departmental Coordinator, Assistant Professor Dr Sikandar Zareen, along with faculty members and a number of students, also participated in the rally. In his remarks, Dr Shinwari described journalism as a crucial pillar of society that helps people differentiate between truth and falsehood. He highlighted that the rise of social media has made responsible journalism even more essential, urging journalists to remain committed to truth and uphold their professional responsibilities in all circumstances. Prof. Dr Safia lauded the students' efforts, noting that such activities reflect their dedication and enthusiasm. She remarked that responsible journalism is a key pillar of society and that the rally demonstrated a bright future for the field. Dr Faisal Javed said that the department continues to provide students with practical exposure to better prepare them for careers in the media industry. Assistant Professor Dr Sikandar Zareen appreciated the students' participation and thanked the distinguished guests. Students from the Mass Communication Department also shared their views, stating that practical activities within the department help them better understand the media landscape and contribute to their academic, intellectual, and professional development.—DNA

Railways to organize Youm-e-Marka-e-Haq celebrations

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Railways, Mohammad Hanif Abbasi, announced on Monday that Pakistan Railways will organize grand and dignified ceremonies across the country, including Rawalpindi, to observe "Youm-e-Marka-e-Haq" on May 10. These celebrations are designed to pay a glowing tribute to the martyrs of the motherland while specifically honoring the sacrifices, bravery, and national services rendered by the armed forces. In a statement, the Minister emphasized that Youm-e-Marka-e-Haq stands as a glorious chapter in Pakistan's history, serving as an occasion to highlight the sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces and the visionary decisions of the national leadership. He noted that the combined leadership of the Prime Minister and the Field Marshal has secured global dignity and respect for the nation, an achievement that remains a source of immense pride for all citizens. The central ceremony is scheduled

to take place in Rawalpindi at 3:00 PM, where the Federal Minister will deliver a keynote address to the attendees. During this event, special recognition will be given to the families of the martyrs, saluting their patience and steadfastness in the face of sacrifice. Beyond the main event, festivities will be held across all seven divisional headquarters of Pakistan Railways under the direct supervision of divisional heads to ensure the message reaches every corner of the country. To enhance the patriotic atmosphere, Rawalpindi Railway Station will be specially decorated under the "Marka-e-Haq" theme. Additionally, the Green Line train will be dispatched with exclusive branding dedicated to the day, while special displays will be set up at 40 major railway stations nationwide. The Minister concluded by stating that Pakistan Railways is committed to celebrating this day with full national zeal to further ignite the spirit of patriotism across the country.—APP

Novo Nordisk brings
obesity care to Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD Novo Nordisk, the Danish leading global healthcare company, marked an important milestone in Pakistan by launching its "Live Lighter" initiative for people living with obesity at a grand event held at the Mohatta Palace, in Karachi. The event brought together healthcare leaders, policymakers, media, and influencers to address one of the country's most pressing yet misunderstood health challenges, obesity. Despite its growing prevalence both globally and in Pakistan, obesity continues to be viewed through a lens of personal responsibility, often delaying timely and appropriate care. It is closely linked to more than 200 medical conditions, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, kidney and liver disorders and some types of cancers that significantly affect long-term health and quality of life and putting increasing pressure on healthcare systems. Addressing the audience, H.E Maja Mortensen, Ambassador

of Denmark to Pakistan, emphasized the importance of partnerships in advancing healthcare outcomes. She said, "Tackling complex health challenges like obesity requires collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to improving lives. Denmark has a strong legacy in healthcare innovation, and it is encouraging to see this expertise contributing to meaningful progress in Pakistan's healthcare landscape." Prof. Emerita Tasnim Ahsan, Dean Medicell Institute of Diabetes Endocrinology & Metabolism, and Director at OMI hospital, said, "Every patient's journey is unique, and weight management remains challenging for many people because of their biology and for some, that biology means lifestyle changes alone may not be enough. Just as we would not ask a patient with diabetes or hypertension to manage their condition through will-power alone, there are patients living with obesity for whom medical intervention, guided by a physician, becomes not just appropriate but necessary. I encourage people living with obesity to speak openly with their doctors about all the options available to them."

Multiple
wedding halls
sealed over
violations

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration took action against several halls to enforce the one-dish rule, imposed fines, filed cases on repeat violations, and make arrests. According to the district administration, strict checks were carried out at various wedding venues across the city to ensure compliance with the one-dish rule. During these inspections, several halls were found serving more than one dish, which is a violation of the policy set by the federal government. As a result, action was taken on the spot, and a number of venues were sealed. Officials said that fines were also imposed on halls that failed to follow the rule. The administration warned that repeated violations would lead to stricter legal action. In cases where wedding hall management was found violating the policy for the second time, formal cases were registered against both managers and owners. Assistant Commissioners led the operations in different areas. They supervised inspections and ensured that action was taken against those responsible. In several instances, individuals linked to the management of these venues were taken into custody and shifted to lock-ups after violations were confirmed. Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Memon has directed officials to continue the crackdown without discrimination.—APP

Fake Greek
card lands
passenger in
handcuffs

ISLAMABAD: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration foiled an attempt by a passenger to travel abroad on fake documents and arrested him at Islamabad International Airport. An official told APP on Monday that the passenger, identified as Muhammad Shafiq, was travelling to Greece on Emirates flight EK-615 on May 2, 2026, when he was intercepted during immigration clearance. He said the suspect was flagged by airline staff, prompting a detailed examination of his travel documents. The official said during scrutiny, a Greek residence card in his possession was found to be fake, following which he was taken into custody. He said the accused had been handed over to the FIA Anti Human Trafficking Circle Islamabad for further legal proceedings. The official said FIA was continuing operations under a zero-tolerance policy against human smuggling.—APP

Raja Bazaar uplift
scheme reviewed

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Amir Khattak, on Monday reviewed progress on the ongoing beautification and development work in Raja Bazaar, directing authorities to ensure high-quality and timely completion. During his visit, officials briefed the commissioner on multiple components of the project, including cleanliness measures, installation of street lighting, footpath improvements, removal of encroachments and enhancement of civic amenities. They briefed that the work from Fawara Chowk to Dingi Khoi is 74 per cent complete. Civil beautification work stands at 60 per cent, while relocation of utility infrastructure is nearing completion: IESCO and Sui Gas lines at 95 per cent, PTCL lines at 98 per cent and WASA lines at 99 per cent. Khattak instructed all departments to maintain quality standards and adhere to deadlines, saying the project would help provide a cleaner, safer and more organised environment for residents. He observed that Raja Bazaar, as a commercial hub of the city, plays a key role in shaping Rawalpindi's image, adding that its improvement would facilitate both citizens and traders. The commissioner also ordered continued action against encroachments, stressing that footpaths must remain clear for pedestrians.—APP

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Balochistan's Forgotten Water Crisis

OSHAF FATIMA

IN Pakistan's largest yet most neglected province, the crisis is not sudden, nor is it hidden. It is slow, persistent, and visible in the most basic act of survival. Across Balochistan, and particularly in the district of Chaghi, access to clean water remains a daily struggle for thousands. In a region where annual rainfall averages between 50 to 100 millimeters in many arid zones, water scarcity is not an occasional hardship but a structural reality. The land receives little, stores even less, and offers almost nothing in return to those who depend on it for life. Water is not a privilege. It is recognized globally as a fundamental human right. Under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 6, access to clean water and sanitation is a universal commitment. Pakistan, as a signatory, has repeatedly acknowledged this obligation in policy frameworks and national resolutions. Yet, in places like Chaghi, this commitment feels distant, almost abstract. For many residents, the idea of safe drinking water remains out of reach, replaced instead by survival strategies that expose them to constant risk.

In scattered settlements, locally known as killis, the reality is stark. People collect water from shallow ditches, muddy depressions formed by occasional rain or minimal runoff. These are not protected sources. They are open, contaminated, and shared indiscriminately between humans and animals. Livestock drink from the same pools where children fill their containers. The water is often visibly polluted, carrying sediments, waste, and pathogens. There is no filtration, no treatment, and no alternative. It is consumed because there is nothing else. This is not merely an issue of discomfort. It is a public health crisis. Contaminated water is a primary source of diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, typhoid, and hepatitis. In regions where healthcare access is already limited, these illnesses can quickly become life-threatening. Children are particularly vulnerable, with repeated exposure leading to chronic malnutrition and weakened immunity. Over time, entire communities are trapped in a cycle where poor water quality leads to illness, and illness deepens poverty.

The burden of water scarcity is not evenly distributed. Women and children often bear the responsibility of fetching water, traveling long distances under harsh conditions. In many cases, families walk for hours, sometimes several kilometers, to reach the nearest available source. The journey is physically exhausting and consumes time that could otherwise be spent on education or livelihood. For children, especially girls, this often means missing school altogether, reinforcing cycles of deprivation that extend across generations. Chaghi carries an additional layer of historical and environmental complexity. The district is known as the site of Pakistan's nuclear tests conducted in 1998. While the tests were a moment of national significance, the long-term impact on local communities remains a subject of concern. Residents frequently report



higher incidences of blood-related illnesses, including cancers, though comprehensive long-term epidemiological data remains limited. In an environment already struggling with water scarcity and poor health infrastructure, such concerns deepen the vulnerability of the population. For decades, the severity of the water crisis has driven some communities to seek solutions beyond national borders. There have been instances where residents crossed into neighboring regions to access water, reflecting the desperation that defines daily life. When access to a basic necessity requires leaving one's own country, it raises serious questions about governance, equity, and the distribution of resources.

Within Chaghi, small communities like Killi Umer Shah illustrate the scale of the crisis at a human level. Home to around 50 families, approximately 200 people, this settlement faces acute water shortages. For these residents, the absence of clean water is not an abstract policy failure but a daily reality that shapes every aspect of life. Children grow up without reliable access to safe drinking water, and families are forced to make difficult choices between health and survival. Amid this bleak landscape, localized efforts offer a glimpse of what is possible. Initiatives led by community groups and organizations are beginning to address the crisis in practical ways. One such effort involves the installation of a solar-powered water pump system in Killi Umer Shah, an initiative supported by UOL relief which I am directly involved with. The project aims to provide a sustainable and reliable source of clean water to the community by the end of May, coinciding with Eid ul Adha. By harnessing solar energy, the system reduces dependence on unreliable electricity supply and minimizes operational costs, making it a viable long-term solution for remote areas.

Such interventions, while impactful, highlight a broader gap. If small organizations with limited resources can implement targeted solutions, the potential for large-scale government action is far greater. What is lacking is not the feasibility of solutions but the prioritization of the issue. Water scarcity in Balochistan is often discussed in policy circles, yet implementation remains inconsistent and slow. Large-scale infrastructure projects are announced but rarely reach the most affected communities. Meanwhile, smaller, decentralized solutions that could be deployed quickly are not scaled up effectively. The government's role must extend beyond acknowledgment to sustained action. Investments in water infrastructure, including dams, reservoirs, and groundwater management systems, are essential. At the same time, there is a need for community-based solutions such as solar-powered pumps, rainwater harvesting systems, and localized filtration units. These approaches are particularly suited to the geographic and economic realities of Balochistan, where centralized systems often fail to reach remote populations. Equally important is the need for accountability and coordination. Water management involves multiple stakeholders, from provincial authorities to local administrations. Without clear responsibility and oversight, efforts remain fragmented. A coordinated strategy that integrates policy, infrastructure, and community engagement is necessary to address the crisis effectively. Public health interventions must also be prioritized. Providing access to clean water is one part of the solution, but addressing the consequences of long-term exposure to contaminated water is equally important. Mobile health units, vaccination campaigns, and awareness programs can help mitigate the immediate impact while longer-term solutions are developed.

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From Stone Arrows to Bunyanun Marsoos

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Pakistan's military experience since independence reflects this global evolution in condensed form. Born in conflict in 1947, the country's early operations were shaped by conventional warfare against India, particularly over Kashmir. Operation Gulmarg, followed by Gibraltar and Grand Slam in 1965, reflected an era of traditional military planning and territorial ambition. The tragedy of 1971, marked by Operation Searchlight, profoundly altered Pakistan's strategic outlook. Thereafter, military involvement increasingly shifted toward internal stability...

FROM the earliest dawn of human society, conflict has been an inescapable feature of collective life. Long before states, borders, or written laws, human groups clashed over territory, water, food, and survival. Even these primitive confrontations were not entirely spontaneous; they involved anticipation, planning, and strategy. Yet planning carried a fatal vulnerability. When intentions were revealed—through betrayal, careless speech, or interception—the advantage vanished. To overcome this, secrecy gradually became a cardinal principle of warfare, and plans began to be concealed under symbols, signals, and later, carefully chosen names. Thus emerged the earliest roots of what would much later be known as military code names.

Archaeological evidence confirms that organized violence predates civilization itself. The prehistoric cemetery at Jebel Sahaba along the Nile, dating back nearly fourteen thousand years, stands as the oldest known testimony to sustained warfare. The skeletons of men, women, and children bear stone arrowheads embedded in bone, some wounds healed, others fatal, indicating not a single massacre but repeated raids over time. Environmental stress and dwindling resources appear to have driven these conflicts, demonstrating that even nomadic hunter-gatherers could engage in prolonged, organized violence when survival was threatened. Similar traces of early warfare appear at sites such as Nataruk in Kenya and in rock art from Mesolithic Europe and Australia, reinforcing the conclusion that war is not merely a by-product of settled life, but a recurring human response to scarcity and fear.

With the advent of writing, warfare entered history in a new and more structured form. In ancient Mesopotamia, early Sumerian records describe conflicts between city-states and neighbouring regions such as Elam. The war between Lagash and Umma around 2450 BC, immortalized on the Stele of the Vultures, reveals organized infantry formations, command hierarchies, territorial conquest, and psychological warfare. Violence was no longer episodic; it became an instrument of state policy. A further leap occurred with Egypt's account of the Battle of Megiddo in 1457 BC, the first conflict described in tactical detail, complete with routes of advance, weaponry, casualty figures, and siege operations. War had become systematic, documented, and consciously commemorated.

As warfare expanded in scale and complexity, the need for secrecy intensified. While ancient armies often named campaigns after places or rulers, the systematic use of operational code names emerged in the early twentieth century, driven by the dangers of intercepted communications. During the First World War, German offensives such as Operation Michael and Georgette used neutral names to conceal intent and sequence large-scale attacks. The Second World War elevated this practice into a sophisticated art. Operations such as Overlord, Barbarossa, Torch, Husky, and Bodyguard demonstrate how code names served not only secrecy but also deception, deliberately misleading adversaries about timing, location, and objectives. Names were chosen precisely because they revealed nothing, or occasionally because they suggested something false.

In the post-war and Cold War eras, code names became increasingly standardized, aided by formal naming systems to avoid duplication and confusion. At the same time, especially in the United States, names began to serve broader political and psychological purposes. Operations such as Just Cause, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom illustrate how code names evolved into instruments of morale-building and public persuasion. Warfare was now fought simultaneously on the battlefield and in the realm of narrative, where language shaped legitimacy, consent, and historical memory.

Pakistan's military experience since independence reflects this global evolution in condensed form. Born in conflict in 1947, the country's early operations were shaped by conventional warfare against India, particularly over Kashmir. Operation Gulmarg, followed by Gibraltar and Grand Slam in 1965, reflected an era of traditional military planning and territorial ambition. The tragedy of 1971, marked by Operation Searchlight, profoundly altered Pakistan's strategic outlook. Thereafter, military involvement increasingly shifted toward internal stability, political intervention, and urban security, as seen in Operation Fair Play and later security operations in Karachi.

The post-9/11 era marked another decisive transformation. Pakistan found itself confronting asymmetric warfare, militancy, and terrorism across its western regions. Operations such as Al-Mizan, Rah-e-Rast, Rah-e-Nijat, Zarb-e-Azb, and Radd-ul-Fasad signified a doctrinal shift from conventional battles to intelligence-led, popula-

tion-centric counter-insurgency. These operations carried names rich in symbolic meaning, invoking righteousness, deliverance, and reform, reflecting an effort to align military action with moral purpose and national resolve.

Closely aligned in spirit and purpose, Operation Markah-e-Haq further reinforces this trajectory. The very phrase, meaning "the battle for truth," reflects not merely a tactical undertaking but a moral assertion. It underscores the continuing evolution of Pakistan's security doctrine, where-in military operations are framed not only as responses to threats but as commitments to justice, stability, and national integrity.

Within this continuum, Operation Bunyanun Marsoos represents a mature expression of Pakistan's contemporary security doctrine. Derived from a Quranic phrase meaning "a solid, unbreakable wall," the name itself conveys unity, discipline, and collective strength. The operation embodied an integrated approach, emphasizing coordination among the armed forces, intelligence agencies, and civilian institutions. It signified a move beyond fragmented responses toward sustained, intelligence-based action against evolving threats. In choosing such a name, Pakistan demonstrated how modern military nomenclature blends operational security with cultural resonance, morale, and strategic messaging.

Across history, from prehistoric raids over dwindling resources to modern campaigns framed by carefully chosen names, warfare has continually adapted to human circumstances. Code names, once simple shields against espionage, have become multifaceted instruments—protecting secrets, enabling deception, coordinating vast forces, and shaping public understanding. Pakistan's experience, spanning conventional wars, internal conflicts, and counter-terrorism campaigns, mirrors this broader human story.

Ultimately, while weapons, technologies, and terminologies change, the underlying impulses of war remain constant. Fear, ambition, insecurity, and power continue to drive conflict, while secrecy remains its trusted companion. Code names, whether carved into ancient stone, whispered over wartime radios, or announced in modern briefings, are more than labels. They are linguistic fortifications, concealing intent, unifying action, and shaping how wars are justified, remembered, and judged long after the echoes of battle have faded.

Separating Breakthrough from Narrative

Dr. Muhammad Bilal Tahir

First, there is an urgent need to redefine research priorities. Instead of pursuing fragmented, low-impact studies, universities must align with national health challenges—such as infectious diseases, maternal health, and non-communicable diseases—while leveraging AI as an enabling tool. Funding mechanisms should reward collaborative, problem-oriented research rather than individual academic output. Second, capacity building must move beyond conventional training. Pakistan needs a new generation...

IN laboratories across the world, a quiet revolution is unfolding. Algorithms are sifting through billions of molecular combinations, predicting protein structures in minutes, and identifying potential drug candidates faster than any human team ever could. The promise is intoxicating: diseases cured in years instead of decades, personalized medicine tailored to each individual, and a future where diagnosis is nearly instantaneous. Yet beneath this optimism lies a more complicated reality—one that demands careful scrutiny, especially for countries like Pakistan navigating fragile research ecosystems. Artificial intelligence has undeniably altered the architecture of modern drug discovery. Traditionally, bringing a new drug to market could take 10 to 15 years and cost billions of dollars, with a high probability of failure. AI compresses this timeline by rapidly screening compounds, simulating biological interactions, and identifying viable candidates with unprecedented speed. In fields like oncology and antibiotic resistance, early results are promising. Machine learning systems have identified novel antibiotics and accelerated vaccine design, particularly during global health crises.

However, the central question remains unresolved: if AI is so powerful, why have we not yet witnessed a truly transformative, AI-designed drug dominating clinical practice? The answer lies in the gap between computational prediction and biological reality. AI excels in pattern recognition, but human biology is not merely a dataset—it is a dynamic, nonlinear system shaped by genetics, environment, and randomness. Many AI-generated drug candidates fail when they encounter the complexity of real-world clinical trials. In other words, AI can suggest possibilities, but it cannot yet guarantee outcomes. This distinction is critical because much of the current discourse is driven by narrative rather than evidence. Venture capital flows, corporate announcements, and media headlines often project AI as a near-miraculous solution to healthcare challenges. Yet regulatory approvals, long-term safety data, and large-scale clinical validation remain bottlenecks that no algorithm can bypass. The risk, therefore, is not that AI will fail—but that expectations will outpace reality, leading to disillusionment or misallocated resources.

For Pakistan, this global shift presents both an opportuni-

ty and a warning. At present, the country's research and development (R&D) expenditure remains below 1% of GDP, significantly lagging behind innovation-driven economies. Universities, despite pockets of excellence, often struggle with limited funding, outdated infrastructure, and weak industry linkages. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has made commendable efforts to promote research culture, quality assurance, and international collaborations, but the scale of transformation required in the age of AI-driven science is far greater. The integration of AI into biomedical research demands more than just computational tools—it requires interdisciplinary ecosystems. Data scientists must collaborate with biologists, chemists with computer engineers, clinicians with statisticians. Unfortunately, Pakistan's academic structures remain largely siloed. Departments operate in isolation, curricula lag behind emerging technologies, and incentives often prioritize publication quantity over translational impact.

This is where policy intervention becomes crucial. First, there is an urgent need to redefine research priorities. Instead of pursuing fragmented, low-impact studies, universities must align with national health challenges—such as infectious diseases, maternal health, and non-communicable diseases—while leveraging AI as an enabling tool. Funding mechanisms should reward collaborative, problem-oriented research rather than individual academic output. Second, capacity building must move beyond conventional training. Pakistan needs a new generation of scientists fluent in both domain knowledge and computational thinking. This requires curriculum reform at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, integrating AI, data analytics, and bioinformatics into core science education. Short-term workshops and certifications are not enough; systemic change is needed. Third, industry-academia linkages must be strengthened. In advanced economies, pharmaceutical companies, research institutions, and startups operate in a tightly connected ecosystem. In Pakistan, this linkage is weak or, in many cases, non-existent. Without industry engagement, AI-driven discoveries will remain confined to academic publications rather than translating into tangible healthcare solutions. Fourth, data infrastructure must be prioritized. AI thrives on data, yet Pakistan lacks robust, standardized, and access-

sible healthcare datasets. Electronic health records are fragmented, and data-sharing frameworks are underdeveloped. Establishing national biomedical data repositories—while ensuring privacy and ethical safeguards—could significantly enhance research capacity. Equally important is the ethical dimension. AI in healthcare raises questions about data ownership, algorithmic bias, and equitable access. If left unchecked, these technologies could deepen existing inequalities, benefiting only those who can afford advanced treatments. Policymakers must ensure that innovation does not come at the cost of inclusivity. Globally, the trajectory of AI in drug discovery is clear: it will play a transformative role, but not in isolation. The future of medicine will be shaped by a hybrid model—where human expertise and machine intelligence complement each other. The narrative of "AI replacing scientists" is not only misleading but counterproductive. The real challenge is building systems where AI augments human capability rather than overshadowing it.

For Pakistan, the stakes are particularly high. The country stands at a crossroads: it can either remain a passive consumer of imported technologies or emerge as an active participant in the global knowledge economy. The difference will depend on strategic vision, institutional reform, and sustained investment in science and innovation. The allure of AI curing diseases is powerful, and not without merit. But breakthroughs are not born from algorithms alone—they emerge from ecosystems that nurture curiosity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Without these foundations, even the most advanced technologies will fail to deliver meaningful impact. The world may indeed be moving toward an era where diseases are predicted, prevented, and treated with unprecedented precision. But the timeline of that future will not be determined by algorithms—it will be determined by the choices we make today. And for countries like Pakistan, the real question is not whether AI will cure diseases, but whether we will build the capacity to be part of that cure—or remain dependent on those who do.

— The writer is Director Quality Enhancement Cell, Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering & Information Technology (KFUEIT), Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan

Briefs

Indian nationals injured...

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the result of the successful interception of the aerial threats. Meanwhile, Syrian authorities reported an increase in overflight traffic after a sharp decline in March caused by the US-Israeli conflict with Iran, which negatively affected travel across the region. The General Authority of Civil Aviation and Air Transport recorded 2,523 transit flights in April, an increase from just 32 in March when the country had closed its airspace due to regional conflict. However, the number of overflight flights is still below the peaks of 4,267 in February and 5,244 in January, according to the Syrian Arab News Agency. Omar Hosari, head of the aviation authority, said the increase in April indicates a gradual return of international aviation activity, noting that Syria's geographic position makes its airspace strategically important for transit flights, SANA added.

Buyers have no ownership...

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The IHC observed that the SC's judgment was binding and created a complete framework governing the rights and obligations of the parties. It held that strict compliance with those directions was mandatory and that any deviation would have legal consequences. Examining the conduct of the petitioner, the court found that BNP failed to honour its financial commitments under the revised terms. The judgment noted that the developer did not make timely payments of instalments and also failed to furnish bank guarantees in the form acceptable to the CDA. The court rejected BNP's stance that the delays were caused by the CDA, observing that the petitioner could not justify prolonged non-compliance on that basis. The IHC further observed that the petitioner had undertaken a substantial financial obligation under SC's order and was expected to demonstrate both capacity and readiness to fulfil those obligations.

Imran, Bushra's pleas...

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judgment, which restored the incarcerated former premier's visitation rights to twice a week. Separately, the court also issued notice to PTI Chairman Barister Gohar Ali Khan in a petition seeking closure of Imran's account on X, formerly Twitter. The petition, filed in September 2025, alleged that inflammatory posts were made from the official X account of the PTI founder. Further hearing of these matters was adjourned till next week. Aleema urges PTI leaders to reach Adiala on Tuesday

Crew members on Iranian...

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According to the report, Iranian state media identified the six as family members of some of the crew. "Custody of Touska is currently being transferred back to its original ownership after the ship was intercepted and seized when attempting to violate the US naval blockade against Iran last month," Hawkins said. Subsequently, FO Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said on the social media platform X, "As a confidence-building measure by the United States of America, twenty-two crew members held aboard the seized Iranian container ship, 'MV Touska', have been evacuated to Pakistan." "The individuals, who were flown to Pakistan last night, will be handed over to the Iranian authorities today," he said. "The Iranian ship will also be backloaded to Pakistani territorial waters for return to its original owners after necessary repairs," Andrabi said, adding that these returns were being coordinated in tandem with the support of both sides.

Hajj reforms: Cost Stability Maintained for 4 Years: DG

The approval, inspection, and digital documentation of these properties were conducted entirely through the 'Masar' portal

MAKKAH MUKARRAMAH: Director General Hajj and Head of the Pakistan Hajj Mission Jeddah, Abdul Wahab Soomro, has stated that Pakistan has successfully maintained Hajj expenses without an increase for the past four years, despite rising global inflation, increased operational costs in Saudi Arabia, and currency fluctuations. He emphasized that administrative reforms, digital governance, and meticulous planning have led to a 100% improvement in service quality. In an exclusive interview with APP, the DG Soomro revealed that 278 buildings were acquired to accommodate 118,925 Pakistani pilgrims in Al-Aziziyah, Bathah Quraish, An-Naseem, Rai Bakhshi, Jarwal, and Nuzha. The approval, inspection, and digital documentation of these properties were conducted entirely through the 'Masar' portal. He noted that major countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and Iraq, have also housed their pilgrims in the Al-Aziziyah district.

Soomro further informed that a 24-hour free-of-cost shuttle service is being provided to pilgrims residing in Al-Aziziyah for easy access to the Haram. In response to a query, he mentioned that all Pakistani pilgrims in Madinah Munawwarah have been accommodated in hotels within the Markaziya area, facilitating their prayers at Masjid-e-Nabwi. The DG Hajj highlighted that improved financial management and negotiation skills have elevated financial transparency to new heights. Consequently, a total of Rs 27 billion has been refunded to pilgrims over the last three years: Rs 17 billion in 2023, Rs 7 billion in 2024, and Rs 3 billion in 2025, marking the largest refund in Pakistan's history. He added that all payments and contracts are executed online via the Masar portal, eliminating corruption, misrepresentation, and human error. Replying to a question, he explained that data-driven technology and compliance with Masar regulations

have modernized the Hajj administrative structure. Among the reforms, the 'Short Hajj' has gained significant popularity; the number of pilgrims opting for it rose from 17,000 in 2023 to 41,825 in 2026, accounting for 35.17% of total pilgrims. Other notable reforms include 'Family Roaming'. Earlier male and female pilgrims were housed separately, but upon the DG Hajj's proposal, family rooms with two or three beds are now available for an additional fee. This year, 13.82% of pilgrims opted for family sharing. Furthermore, the 'Green Baggage' initiative has revolutionized luggage identification at airports, leading to a sharp decline in cases of lost baggage. DG Hajj also shared that arrangements at the Holy Sites (Mas-hair), which previously consisted of tents and air coolers, have now been upgraded to full air-conditioning. Mobile SIM cards are provided to pilgrims immediately upon arrival in Makkah or Madinah to ensure

they stay connected with their families. Additionally, a WhatsApp-based command system has been implemented for 29 hospitality centers, making building inspections mandatory 72 hours in advance, he added. Providing a snapshot of Hajj 2026, Soomro stated that 118,925 Pakistanis will perform Hajj under the Government Scheme, comprising 56.47% men and 43.53% women. Regarding transportation, 55% of pilgrims will utilize the train service, while 45% will use buses. The highest number of departures are from Islamabad (30.23%), Lahore (25.17%), and Karachi (25.06%), with 95.50% of pilgrims being under the age of 70. It is worth noting that Abdul Wahab Soomro was honored with the 'Excellence Award' by the Saudi government last year, securing the first position among eight global heads of missions. He reaffirmed that the primary goal remains to make the pilgrimage easier and more memorable for pilgrims every year. - APP

Iran attacks US ships; Centcom denies

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ceasefire came into effect on April 8, and Iran's stranglehold on the strategic strait following US-Israeli attacks on Tehran has been a main point of contention. Trump said Sunday the new maritime operation, which he dubbed "Project Freedom," was a "humanitarian" gesture for crews aboard the many ships swept up in the blockade and which may be running low on food and other crucial supplies. "We will use best efforts to get their Ships and Crews safely out of the Strait. In all cases, they said they will not be returning until the area becomes safe for navigation," Trump said in a Truth Social post, noting operations would begin on Monday. In response, the head of the Iranian parliament's national security commission said: "Any American interference in the new maritime regime of the Strait of Hormuz will be considered a violation of the ceasefire." By blocking the Strait of Hormuz, Iran has choked off major flows of oil, gas and fertiliser to the world economy, while the United States has imposed a counter-blockade on Iranian ports. Trump, in his post, said he was "fully aware that my Representatives are having very positive discussions with the Country of Iran, and that these discussions could lead to something very positive for all." He made no direct mention of what Tehran described as a 14-point plan "focused on ending the war." US Central Command said it would use guided-missile destroyers, over 100 land and sea-based aircraft, multi-domain unmanned platforms and 15,000 service members in the Hormuz effort. As of April 29, more than 900 commercial vessels were located in the Gulf, according to maritime intelligence firm AXSMarine.

Security lapse at parliament lodges

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the unauthorised entry of unrelated persons in the Parliament Lodges and termed the security flaws a "serious threat". He directed authorities to submit details of all complaints received at the lodges and the subsequent action taken. The deputy chairman also raised questions over delays in renovation and repair work, and expressed dismay at the poor condition of lifts. Citing his own experience of getting stuck in a lift, he called such incidents an "administrative failure". Lack of progress despite repeated complaints by senators was termed negligence. Nasar also sought the complete allotment record of Parliament Lodges. He demanded details, cost breakdown, and reasons for the delay in the project for 104 new blocks. Nasar expressed regret over the hold-up and directed immediate action. Describing the hygiene situation at the lodges as "deplorable", the deputy chairman noted that there was an alarming number of rats. He also took note of a social media video showing the entry of an unrelated woman into the lodge and ordered an inquiry into the matter. "No compromise is acceptable on the security of residents," Nasar said, ordering all repair work to be completed immediately and complaints redressed. Senators at the meeting expressed reservations over the administration's inattention to their complaints.

Sufficient fuel stock, says Dar

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DPM/FM commended the efforts of all relevant stakeholders for ensuring the steady and reliable availability of fuel across the country, particularly amid prevailing global and domestic challenges. The meeting was attended by Ministers for Petroleum, IT & Telecommunication, Minister of State for Finance, SAPM Mr. Tariq Bajwa, Secy Petroleum, Secy Interior, representatives of OGRA, and senior government officials from relevant ministries and departments.

Wani Pledges Hockey Revival Under PM Vision

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: President of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Mohyuddin Wani, has reaffirmed his commitment to reviving Pakistan hockey in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, stating that all-out efforts will be made to restore the sport's lost glory. He expressed these views during a meeting with office-bearers of the District Hockey Association Rawalpindi. The meeting was attended by senior sports journalist Zulfiqar Baig, DHA President Zaheer-ul-Haq, Secretary Tahir Shirazi and Treasurer Muhammad Zahid. Mohyuddin Wani said a comprehensive strategy has been devised to promote hockey at school and college levels across the country. Under the plan, dedicated boys' and girls' development programmes will be launched under the supervision of qualified coaches in Rawalpindi and other cities to attract young

talent towards the national sport. He added that national and international hockey events will also be organised through sponsorship support to provide players with quality exposure and competitive opportunities. "The doors of the Pakistan Hockey Federation are open to every individual genuinely working for the betterment of hockey," Wani said, stressing that collective efforts are essential for rebuilding Pakistan's hockey legacy. On the occasion, Zaheer-ul-Haq announced that a special hockey event in memory of former PHF President Pervez Aslam Kayani will be held at Shahnaz Sheikh Hockey Stadium. The event will be attended by Mohyuddin Wani, former Senator Chaudhry Tanveer Khan and Member National Assembly Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry as chief guests. The PHF president assured full support to all initiatives aimed at the improvement and promotion of hockey in Pakistan.

Babar wants players to play all three-format cricket



LAHORE: Peshawar Zalmi captain Babar Azam has said that a cricketer should play three-format cricket as the three formats complement one another. Speaking at the post PSL 11 final press conference at the Gaddafi stadium here on Monday night, he said that test cricket teaches patience and play long innings to the batters, adding that the red-ball cricket helps cricketers fashioning their white-ball cricket. On inspiration behind regaining form after slump, Babar Azam said the former batting great Zaheer Abbas gave him confidence and reminded that the slump in form is temporary and he should keep working hard. "All player face slump in form but the batter should focus on training and maintain right mind-set", he added. Babar Azam dedicated his return to form to the confidence given to him by his family, close friends and the coaches he worked with, adding that he was happy to lift the trophy for the Peshawar Zalmi. On his coaching staff, the Zalmi captain the Head Coach Ottis Gibson, without burdening him with too much advice, asked him to play his natural game and play his cricket as he knows his game and the conditions better than others. On lifting first trophy as captain, Babar Azam said he was happy to have won one trophy at least, adding that Aaron Hardie and Abdul Samad played with sane heads to ensure that Peshawar Zalmi. He said the team needed a partnership after losing four wickets and they did the same. On the test series against Bangladesh soon after PSL 11, Babar Azam said that he was accustomed to playing back-to-back series as the team played during the COVID 19, adding that a cricketer will require to see the condition and perform. Babar Azam hailed Head Coach Ottis Gibson and Misbah-ul-Haq for working hard with the cricketers and getting the maximum out of them. He said the coached put in their hard work as they have to work with 25 cricketers from different parts of the world and get the best out of them. - APP

France pushes for global action

PARIS: G7 chair France pushed Monday for faster global action to reduce methane emissions at a conference in Paris as the International Energy Agency said discharges from the fossil fuel sector remained near record levels. Using its role as rotating president of the Group of Seven industrialized powers, France convened government officials, industry leaders and experts to build momentum ahead of the UN's COP31 climate summit in November. Methane, the second biggest contributor to climate change, stays in the atmosphere far less longer than CO2, but its warming effect is roughly 80 times more potent over a 20-year period. "I sincerely hope that the discussions we will have today will enable us to join our forces to accelerate the implementation of effective solutions to reduce methane emissions," French Ecological Transition Minister Monique Barbut said in a speech. "Of course, action on methane is not a fight of any single actor and nobody can win it alone," Barbut said. Under the Global Methane Pledge, launched at COP26 in Glasgow in 2021, nearly 160 countries have committed to cutting global methane emissions by 30 percent by 2030 compared with 2020 levels. But Barbut said the world remains "very far" from meeting that goal. - APP

Three dead, several ill in suspected hantavirus outbreak

The WHO noted that detailed investigations are ongoing, including laboratory testing and epidemiological assessments, while medical care is being provided to passengers and crew. "Sequencing of the virus is also ongoing," it said



BAKU: The World Health Organization (WHO) said Sunday that three people have died after a Netherlands-based cruise ship was hit by a suspected outbreak of the hantavirus, a rodent-borne virus that can cause severe and potentially fatal respiratory illness, Anadolu agency reported. "Of the six affected individuals, three have died and one is currently in intensive care in South Africa," the agency said. Netherlands-based Oceanwide Expeditions confirmed the fatalities in a news release, adding that "two crew members on board require urgent medical care." The WHO noted that detailed investigations are ongoing, including laboratory testing and epidemiological assessments, while medical care is being provided to passengers and crew. "Sequencing of the virus is also ongoing," it said. According to the news release, Cape Verdean authorities have not yet approved the disembarkation of passengers requiring medical care from the MV Hondius, although local health officials have assessed two symptomatic individuals. "Hantavirus infections are typically linked to environmental exposure (exposure to infected rodents' urine or faeces). While rare, hantavirus may spread between people and can lead to severe respiratory illness and requires careful patient monitoring, support and response," the agency said. The organization said it is coordinating with member states and the ship's operator for the medical evacuation of two symptomatic passengers along with broader public health measures. "WHO is facilitating coordination between Member States and the Ship's operators for medical evacuation of two symptomatic passengers, as well as full public health risk assessment and support to the remaining passengers on board. WHO is grateful for the rapid actions and coordination," it said. "We have informed our National Focal Points according to the International Health Regulations and a Disease Outbreak News for the public will be issued," WHO added. The cruise ship set sail from Argentina around three weeks ago with about 150 passengers on board, making stops in Antarctica and other destinations en route to Cape Verde, according to media reports. Sky News reported that one of the affected passengers is British, citing South Africa's Department of Health. - APP

Over 5,000 measles cases recorded in Kazakhstan

ASTANA: Kazakhstan has reported a rise in measles cases in 2026, prompting health officials to intensify prevention measures, Qazinform Since the beginning of 2026, more than 5,000 measles cases have been registered. The ministry noted that measles remains one of the most contagious airborne viral diseases. Despite the availability of an effective vaccine, the disease continues to circulate both globally and within the country. According to the World Health Organization, approximately 247,000 measles cases are expected worldwide in 2025. Declining vaccination rate - a key risk factor Epidemiologists link the rise in cases to several factors, including declining vaccination rates, increasing vaccine refusals, population mobility, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many people missed routine immunizations. In Kazakhstan, after a nearly sevenfold decline in cases in 2025, a new increase was observed by the end of the year. Children most affected: Children remain the most vulnerable group: up to 83% of cases occur among those under 14, with more than 70% among children under five. Moreover, 76.3% of cases involve unvaccinated individuals, a significant share of whom were not vaccinated due to parental refusal. The most severe epidemiological situation is observed in Astana, Almaty, and several other regions. Response measures. Authorities are implementing a range of measures to expand vaccination coverage, including: routine immunization of children; additional vaccinations for infants aged 6-11 months; catch-up vaccinations for children aged 2-5 years; catch-up immunizations for adolescents; vaccination of healthcare workers without confirmed immunization status. News Agency reports, citing the Ministry of Healthcare. - APP

Iran hangs three more men over protests

Iranian authorities have carried out executions on a near-daily basis in recent weeks, in what activists have denounced as a bid to instill fear in society at a time of international and domestic tension

PARIS: Iran executed three men charged over protests this January, authorities said Monday, the latest in a wave of hangings of convicts seen by rights groups as political prisoners against the backdrop of the war against the United States and Israel. Iranian authorities have carried out executions on a near-daily basis in recent weeks, in what activists have denounced as a bid to instill fear in society at a time of international and domestic tension. Mehdi Rassouli, Mohammad Reza Miri and Ebrahim Dolatabadi were executed after being convicted over unrest in the eastern city of Mashhad in January, the judiciary's Mizan news agency announced. It was not specified when or where they were executed. But the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRA-

NA) said Rassouli, 25, and Miri, 21, were hanged at dawn on Sunday at the Vakilabad Prison in Mashhad. The protests began in December sparked by grievances over the cost of living but intensified into nationwide rallies against the Islamic republic, peaking as mass demonstrations on the nights of January 8 and 9. Rights groups say thousands were killed in a crackdown by security forces, while authorities have blamed "rioters" who they say were backed by the United States and Israel. Mizan said Rassouli and Miri were responsible for the death of a member of the security forces and described Dolatabadi as one of the "instigators" of the unrest in Mashhad. But Norway-based NGO Iran Human Rights described the three as "political prisoners" who had been sentenced "after unfair trials

in the Revolutionary Courts." It said that since executions resumed in March during the war against the United States and Israel, Iran had executed 24 men seen as "political prisoners." Thirteen men were executed over the January 2026 protests, another man over 2022 demonstrations, nine men over alleged links to the banned People's Mujahedin opposition group and one over membership of a Sunni militant organization. Within that same timeframe, an additional four individuals have been executed for alleged espionage for Israel. "The international community, especially the European Union, must respond decisively to this ongoing wave of executions," said IHR director Mahmood Amiriy Moghaddam.

"Unless the political cost of these executions is raised through clear and strong international reactions, there is a serious risk of daily executions continuing in the weeks and months ahead," he added. Amnesty International in a statement on May 1 had said the international community must "not stand idly by while the Iranian authorities continue to escalate the arbitrary execution of political dissidents and protesters to instill fear." Amnesty said it had documented cases of 13 of the men who it said had been subjected to torture and "convicted in grossly unfair trials that relied on forced 'confessions' and lasted a few hours." Iran is the world's most prolific executioner after China, according to rights groups, and last year it hanged at least 1,639 people, according to figures from IHR. - APP

Briefs

Rupee gains
01 paisa
against US
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.76 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 278.77. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279 and Rs 279.80, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee increased by Rs 0.82 to close at Rs 326.51 from the previous day's close of Rs 325.69, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen went up by 03 paisa and closed at Rs 1.77, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 1.92 and closed at Rs 378.01 compared to the previous day's Rs 376.09. The exchange rates of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal remained stagnant and closed at Rs 75.89 and Rs 74.32, respectively.—APP

Motorbikes,
three-wheelers
sale increases
30.87%

ISLAMABAD: The sale of motorbikes and three-wheelers in the country has witnessed an increase of 30.87 per cent during the first nine months of the current fiscal year (2025-26) as compared to sales of the corresponding months of the last year. During July-March (2025-26), as many as 1,429,501 motorbikes and three-wheelers were sold against the sale of 1,092,235 units in July-March (2024-25), according to the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA). The sale of Honda motorcycles surged by 33.43 per cent from 917,598 units to 1,224,260 units, whereas the sale of Suzuki motorcycles also rose by 38.77 per cent from 18,665 units to 25,903 units during the period under review. The sales of United Auto motorcycles witnessed an increase of 28.85 per cent from 105,591 units to 136,058 units, while the sales of Yamaha motorbikes came down to 1,333 units from 4,059 units, witnessing a decrease of 67.15 per cent. Meanwhile, the sale of United Auto three-wheelers increased from 856 units to 1,071 units during the period under review, while the sale of Qingqi three-wheelers also increased by 10.21 per cent from 8,037 units to 8,858 units. However, Sazgar three-wheelers sales slipped by 0.46 per cent to 19,437 units from 19,528 units last year.—APP

Agri
chemicals
imports grew
7.23 %

ISLAMABAD: Agriculture and other chemical group imports into the country during the first 09 months of current financial year grew by 7.23 percent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July-March 2025-26, agriculture chemicals worth of \$7.769 billion were imported in order to fulfill the local requirements as compared to the imports of \$7.245 billion of the same period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The import of the fertilizers manufactured during the period under review grew by 4.16 percent as 806,244 metric tons of fertilizer worth \$522.495 million were imported as compared to the imports of 820,118 metric tons valued at \$501.606 million of the same period of the last year. Meanwhile, the country spent \$150.324 million on the imports of about 30,341 metric tons of pesticides, as compared to the imports of 20,995 metric tons costing \$108.490 million of the same period of the last year. During last 09 months of the current financial year, about 1.900 million metric tons of plastic material worth \$2.163 million were also imported as compared to the imports of 1.607 million metric tons valued at \$2.008 million of the same period of the last year.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, along with Wang Yaodong, Chairman CSCEC, and Ren Liangbo, Director CSCEC (Pakistan Branch), joins a group of schoolchildren in cutting a cake to mark the 75th anniversary of Pakistan-China Friendship at an event jointly organized by CSCEC and UNI International, in the Federal Capital.

Raja Pervaiz highlights enduring Pak-China ties

The event featured orderly and meaningful sessions. It opened with the national anthems of Pakistan and China, followed by the unveiling of a Chinese calligraphy message board inscribed with "Long Live the China-Pakistan Friendship"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A grand China-Pakistan exchange event was held in UNI International-China Pakistan Deep Love Cultural Exploration Center in Islamabad, gathering distinguished guests to celebrate China Pakistan 75th Anniversary friendship, review diplomatic achievements and promote cultural exchanges, which highlights the profound "Iron Brother" bond between the two countries. The event welcomed numerous notable guests, including Chief Guest Former Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Wang Lei (Director of CGTN Urdu, China Media Group), and CSCEC Pakistan Branch representatives: Wang Yaodong (Chairman), Liu Yanming (Vice Chairman) and Ren Liangbo (Director). Also present were Kashif (Secretary

of All Pakistan China Friendship Association), Adnan Hameed (a dedicated China-Pakistan cultural exchange activist), as well as teachers and students from Apex education system headed by Principal Fahad Ahmed Khan and members of the UNI International team members headed by Max Ma, Founder and CEO of UNI International. The event featured orderly and meaningful sessions. It opened with the national anthems of Pakistan and China, followed by the unveiling of a Chinese calligraphy message board inscribed with "Long Live the China-Pakistan Friendship". A cake-cutting ceremony was held to mark the 75th anniversary, and Raja Pervaiz Ashraf shared stories about China-Pakistan diplomatic relations, which deeply moved all by attendees. Subsequently, Liu Yanming and his CSCEC team shared the company's key milestone projects in Pakistan, showcasing the fruitful achievements

of China-Pakistan cooperation in the infrastructure field. Addressing the gathering, Former PM Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said that the Pakistan-China relationship, built on mutual trust, respect, and shared aspirations, has become a shining example of inter-state cooperation in the modern world. He stated that Pakistan and China are not just neighbors but "iron brothers," adding that the friendship has grown stronger over time, transcending political changes and global uncertainties. He described Pakistan as a peace-loving nation and appreciated the role of Pakistani leadership during the US-Iran conflict, while also praising China's important role and continued support to Pakistan. He extended heartfelt congratulations to the people and leadership of both Pakistan and China, expressing hope that the bilateral friendship will continue to grow stronger with each passing year.

Kyrgyzstan, China's call for interregional cooperation

BISHKEK: Special Presidential Representative for Special Assignments Bakyt Torobaev held a series of bilateral events in Hangzhou, China, aimed at expanding practical cooperation between the regions of Kyrgyzstan and Zhejiang Province. According to the Cabinet of Ministers press service, Torobaev met with Zhejiang Province Governor Liu Jie on April 29, 2026. During the talks, the parties discussed prospects for deepening interregional cooperation and intensifying business ties. Particular attention was paid to developing cooperation in priority areas, including digitalization, logistics, energy, and transport. The Chinese side expressed interest in expanding direct contacts with Kyrgyzstan's regions, including establishing sister-city relations between Hangzhou and Osh. Following the meeting, an agreement was reached to organize a return visit by a Zhejiang Provincial delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic with the participation of leading regional enterprises, including Alibaba, Geely, and other major companies. On April 30, a Kyrgyz-Chinese business forum was held in Hangzhou, attended by over 150 companies. In his speech, Torobaev noted Kyrgyzstan's steady economic growth, ongoing reforms to improve the investment climate, and existing government support measures for investors.—APP

Iraqi court sentences 4 to prison for promoting banned Party

BAGHDAD: An Iraqi court on Monday sentenced four people to six years in prison on charges of promoting the ideas of the banned Baath Party led by former leader Saddam Hussein. The Karkh Criminal Court said in a statement that those convicted were found in possession of the banned materials on their cellphones in Kirkuk province during 2025 and 2026. After the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq toppled Saddam's autocratic rule, the country implemented a broad de-Baathification policy aimed at removing the influence of the Baath Party from state institutions. The policy targeted former party members, particularly those in senior positions under the previous government, and led to large-scale dismissals across the public sector, including the military, education and civil service. In recent years, however, such convictions have been rare. Some former officials were allowed to return to service if they were not involved in serious crimes.—APP

More than 300 families evacuate in Philippines due to a volcano

MANILA: More than 300 families have been evacuated after massive amounts of ash billowed from the Mayon volcano over the weekend due to the collapse of lava deposits from its slopes, officials said Monday. There was no explosive eruption from Mayon, which has been erupting mildly on and off since January, but huge deposits of lava on its southwestern slope suddenly cascaded down in a pyroclastic flow — an avalanche of hot rocks, ash and gas — before nightfall on Saturday, said Teresito Bacolcol, director of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology. No deaths or injuries were reported, but massive clouds of ash scattered over 87 villages in three towns, catching many by surprise and slowing down motorists due to poor visibility, officials said. "The ashfall was just so thick and there was zero visibility even in our national road," Mayor Caloy Baldo of Camalig town, which lies near the volcano's foothills, said. "Some villagers panicked but we advised them to calm down," Baldo told The Associated Press. Vegetable farms were damaged by the ashfall, which also killed four water buffaloes and a cow in Camalig, Baldo said, adding that a cleanup was underway in his town of 8,000 people in Albay province. "It's calm again now but the danger is always there," Bacolcol said of Mayon's condition Monday. The 2,462-meter (8,077-foot) volcano is one of the Philippines' top tourism draws because of its near-perfect cone shape. But it's also the most active of the country's 24 volcanoes. Authorities raised the five-step alert around Mayon to level 3 in January after a series of mild eruptions that caused intermittent rockfalls, some as big as cars, from its peak crater along with deadly pyroclastic flows.—APP

Iran hangs 3 men over Jan protests in execution 'wave'

PARIS:PARIS: Iran executed three men charged over protests this January, authorities said Monday, the latest in a wave of hangings of convicted men by rights groups as political prisoners against the backdrop of the war against the United States and Israel. Iranian authorities have carried out executions on a near-daily basis in recent weeks, in what activists have denounced as a bid to instill fear in society at a time of international and domestic tension. Mehdi Rassouli, Mohammad Reza Miri and Ebrahim Dolatabadi were executed after being convicted over unrest in the eastern city of Mashhad in January, the judiciary's Mizan news agency announced. It was not specified when or where they were executed. But the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) said Rassouli, 25, and Miri, 21, were hanged at dawn on Sunday at the Vakilabad Prison in Mashhad. The protests began in December sparked by grievances over the cost of living but intensified into nationwide rallies against the Islamic republic, peaking as mass demonstrations on the nights of January 8 and 9. Rights groups say thousands were killed in a crackdown by security forces, while authorities have blamed "rioters" who they say were backed by the United States and Israel. Mizan said Rassouli and Miri were responsible for the death of a member of the security forces and described Dolatabadi as one of the "instigators" of the unrest in Mashhad. But Norway-based NGO Iran Human Rights described the three as "political prisoners" who had been sentenced "after unfair trials in the Revolutionary Courts." It said that since executions resumed in March during the war against the United States and Israel, Iran had executed 24 men seen as "political prisoners." Thirteen men were executed over the January 2026 protests, another man over 2022 demonstrations, nine men over alleged links to the banned People's Mujahedin opposition group and one over membership of a Sunni militant organization. Within that same timeframe, an additional four individuals have been executed for alleged espionage for Israel. "The international community, especially the European Union, must respond decisively to this ongoing wave of executions," said IHR director Mahmood Amiry Moghaddam. "Unless the political cost of these executions is raised through clear and strong international reactions, there is a serious risk of daily executions continuing in the weeks and months ahead," he added. Amnesty International in a statement on May 1 had said the international community must "not stand idly by while the Iranian authorities continue to escalate the arbitrary execution of political dissidents and protesters to instill fear." Amnesty said it had documented cases of 13 of the men who it said had been subjected to torture and "convicted in grossly unfair trials that relied on forced 'confessions' and lasted a few hours." Iran is the world's most prolific executioner after China, according to rights groups, and last year it hanged at least 1,639 people, according to figures from IHR. —DNA

France pushes for global action on methane emissions

"In oil, gas and coal, a significant share of emissions comes from leaks, venting or flaring. Addressing these issues is within reach," she added

PARIS: G7 chair France pushed Monday for faster global action to reduce methane emissions at a conference in Paris as the International Energy Agency said discharges from the fossil fuel sector remained near record levels. Using its role as rotating president of the Group of Seven industrialized powers, France convened government officials, industry leaders and experts to build momentum ahead of the UN's COP31 climate summit in November. Methane, the second biggest contributor to climate change, stays in the atmosphere far less longer than CO2, but its warming effect is roughly 80 times more potent over a 20-year period. "I sincerely hope that the discussions we will have today will enable us to join our forces to accelerate the implementation of effective solutions to reduce methane emissions," French Ecological Transition Minister Monique Barbut said in a speech. "Of course, action on methane is not a fight of any single actor and nobody can win it alone,"

Barbut said. Under the Global Methane Pledge, launched at COP26 in Glasgow in 2021, nearly 160 countries have committed to cutting global methane emissions by 30 per cent by 2030 compared with 2020 levels. But Barbut said the world remains "very far" from meeting that goal. The fossil fuel sector — oil, gas and coal — accounts for 35 per cent of methane emissions from human activity, the IEA said in a report on Monday. "Yet there is still no sign that methane emissions from fossil fuel operations are falling, despite well-known and proven mitigation pathways," according to the IEA's Global Methane Tracker 2026. Methane emissions from the energy sector come from leaks from gas pipelines and other infrastructure, or is deliberately released during maintenance procedures. Such emissions from the energy sector remained "near record highs," the report said. "If select countries with spare existing gas export capacity and importing countries

were to implement readily accessible methane abatement measures across their gas systems, nearly 15 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas could very quickly be made available to markets," it said. Over the longer term such measures "could deliver nearly 100 bcm of gas to markets each year, while eliminating non-emergency gas flaring could unlock a further 100 bcm," it said. Agriculture is also a major emitter through livestock — cows and sheep release methane during digestion and in their manure — and rice cultivation, where flooded fields create ideal conditions for methane-emitting bacteria. Discarded household waste also creates large amounts of methane when it decomposes if left to rot in landfills. "We must, however, be clear the energy sector offers today the fastest and often the most cost effective reductions," Barbut said. "In oil, gas and coal, a significant share of emissions comes from leaks, venting or flaring. Addressing these issues is within reach," she added.—DNA

Briefs

Four migrants found dead

ZAGREB: Four migrants were found dead near the Slovenian border and two others were taken to hospital in a serious condition after being transported by truck in "inhumane conditions," Croatian police said Monday. Thirteen other people were also found by police near the Croatian village of Donje Prilisce, 70 kilometers (43 miles) southwest of the capital Zagreb and had been taken to a detention center. Police said the group were allegedly dropped at the border by an unknown smuggler who fled. There was no detail provided on the cause of death, but investigations were underway. Croatia, a member of the European Union, is a major transit country for irregular migrants seeking to reach Europe via the Balkan route. Earlier this year, a Chinese man died after a migrant boat capsized while crossing a river from Bosnia into Croatia. — APP

Lebanon leader: no talks with Israel until war stops

NEWS DESK

BEIRUT: Lebanon's parliament speaker, who is the most senior Shiite politician and a close ally of Hezbollah, said on Monday there could be no negotiations with Israel without a halt to the war that has raged on in southern Lebanon in spite of a ceasefire. Nabih Berri's comments, made as Israeli forces ordered residents out of four more villages in southern Lebanon, underline challenges facing US efforts to forge peace between the states which held rare, face-to-face talks last month. Israel invaded Lebanon in March to root out Hezbollah, the Iran-backed Shiite armed group, which fired across the border in support of Tehran after the United States and Israel attacked Iran. Tehran says any deal to end the wider war must also halt fighting in Lebanon, though Washington says the issues are separate. Israel and Lebanon agreed a ceasefire in mid-April which has since been extended into May. But while fighting has been diminished, it has not halted, with Israel maintaining an occupation of southern Lebanon and demolishing villages there, while Hezbollah has continued attacks on Israeli forces.

Bilawal hails Pakistan's victory against India during Marka-i-Haq

"We are not a nation that bows before pressure. We are not a nation that compromises its sovereignty. We are a nation that rises again and again, stronger, prouder and more united"

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Monday hailed Pakistan's "victory" against India during last year's military conflict, affirming that the country was "not a nation that bows". He was addressing an event in Karachi organised by the Sindh government to commemorate Marka-i-Haq, where Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah also spoke. The term "Marka-i-Haq" is used by the state to refer to the 2025 conflict with India, starting from the April 22 Pahalgam attack to the end of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos with a ceasefire on May 10. "This victory was not the victory of weapons alone. It was a triumph of resolve. It was a triumph of unity and of people who refused to kneel," said Bilawal, who is also the former foreign minister and had led a delegation abroad to convey Pakistan's stance on the conflict. "From the mountains of the north to the shores of the Arabian Sea, from the fields of Punjab to the deserts of Sindh and Balochistan, Pakistan stood as one," he affirmed. "We are not a nation that bows before pressure. We are not a nation that compromises its sovereignty. We are a nation that rises again and again, stronger, prouder and more united," the PPP chairman declared. Bilawal recalled, "Our armed forces fought with courage, discipline and honour. Our diplomats defended our position with clarity and conviction, and our brave and resilient people stood firm behind their nation." "Today, we do not merely mark the passage of time. We mark the endurance of a nation. We commemorate not just a victory, but the vindication of the very idea of Pakistan," he said. Bilawal recalled that a year ago, Pakistan "stood at

the edge of uncertainty [as] drums of conflict echoed our borders". "The air was thick with fear, speculation, and the designs of those who believed Pakistan could be bent, broken or bullied. They were wrong," the PPP chairman added. He emphasised that victory was "not measured by territory held or battles won", but by "dignity preserved [and] sovereignty defended". Victory, he added, was measured "by the message sent to the world that Pakistan will never be coerced, never be silenced, and will never surrender". The ex-FM also took aim at those "beyond

our borders who seek to rewrite history", asserting that history was "not written by noise", but rather by nations that endured. Bilawal clarified that Pakistan did not seek conflict or glorify war. "But when the test came, we did not falter. We stood our ground not out of aggression, but out of necessity; not out of ambition, but out of duty. This moment demands not arrogance but reflection, not complacency but responsibility." The PPP chairman also spoke about the country's path forward, noting that victory brought with it the "burden to build a stronger Pakistan". "The burden to ensure that the sacrifices made are honoured not only in words but in action. [...] This means investing in our people, education, health, and opportunity. It means strengthening our economy so that no external pressure can dictate our destiny. It means pursuing peace not as a sign of weakness, but as a reflection of strength," he added. The former FM asserted that peace must be just, dignified and mutual. Addressing the youth, he said, "This victory belongs to you as much as it does to any institution or any individual. You are the custodians of this nation's future."



Gold prices decrease by Rs 3,800 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold decreased in the local market on Monday, with 24 karat gold per tola falling by Rs 3,800 to settle at Rs 479,962 compared to Rs 483,762 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold declined by Rs 3,257 to Rs 411,490 from Rs 414,747, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went down by Rs 2,986 to Rs 377,212 against Rs 380,198. In the international market, the price of gold decreased by \$38 to \$4,576 per ounce from \$4,614. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola decreased by Rs 100 to Rs 7,914 from Rs 8,014, while the price of 10 grams of silver also declined by Rs 86 to Rs 6,784 from Rs 6,870. The price of silver in the international market decreased by \$1.00 to \$74.30 per ounce from \$75.30. — APP

Norway reiterates support for Pakistan peace efforts



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday received Deputy Foreign Minister of Norway Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, and both sides discussed the evolving regional situation. Deputy Prime Minister Dar underscored Pakistan's continued efforts to promote engagement and dialogue for peace and stability in the region and beyond. Kravik reiterated Norway's support for

Pakistan's constructive role and its ongoing efforts toward a peaceful and durable resolution of the conflict. Both sides also explored avenues to further strengthen bilateral relations and deepen engagement across diverse sectors of mutual interest. Kravik conveyed an invitation from the Norwegian Foreign Minister to DPM Dar to participate in the Oslo Forum scheduled for next month, which expressed appreciation for the invitation. Both sides agreed to remain in close contact on bilateral matters and issues relating to peace, stability, and development.

PSX rises after oil eases, Middle East deal optimism returns

KSE-100 Index surges to intraday high of 167,245.54, picking up 4,251.37 points, or 2.61%

LIQUIDITIES rose on Monday as easing oil prices and growing expectations of a Middle East deal revived risk appetite, prompting investors to hunt for value in high-dividend shares after last week's sharp correction. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index traded between a high of 167,245.54 (up 4,251.37 points, or 2.61%) and a low of 164,713.27 (up 1,719.10 points, or 1.05%) versus the previous close of 162,994.17. "The increasing chances of a deal in the Middle East, coupled with easing oil prices, are bringing back confidence in the market," said the CEO of Ismail Iqbal Securities. "Investors are gaining confidence and are value hunting in shares which are giving good dividend yields," he added. Oil prices eased after US President Donald Trump said the United States would begin efforts to assist ships stranded in the Strait of Hormuz, although the lack of a US-Iran peace deal kept prices supported above \$100. Trump said on Sunday the US would guide ships safely out of the strait, but shipping through the strategic waterway remained constrained as negotiations continued over the weekend. Iran has said the US responded to its 14-point proposal via Pakistan and it was reviewing the response, though Trump said it was unlikely to be acceptable.

UAE says OPEC exit not against anyone

DNA

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates' shocking decision to leave Saudi-dominated Opec was not targeted at anyone, the UAE minister who heads the state oil giant said on Monday. The move aimed at focusing on national priorities and the UAE economy, said Sultan Al Jaber, who is CEO of state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc) and the country's industry and advanced technology minister. The decision, which took effect on Friday, followed months of tensions with neighbouring Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter and de facto leader of Opec, over foreign policy, oil output and the Middle East war, which has strained Gulf economies. A close partnership between the Gulf nations has turned into an open rivalry since a public falling out in December over Yemen, but the minister said the decision to withdraw from the oil cartel was not aimed at any nation. "The UAE's sovereign decision to reposition itself within the global energy landscape, and to exit Opec and Opec+, is not a decision directed against anyone," he told a conference in Abu Dhabi. The exit of the UAE, which was Opec's fourth-largest producer, dealt a blow to the cartel's ability to control oil prices.

It also further strained UAE-Saudi ties, which plunged after their row over Yemen in December, according to analysts. The two sides have long been at odds over Opec production quotas. Leaving Opec "serves our national interests and long-term strategic objectives, aligns with our industrial, economic, and developmental ambitions, and gives us greater ability to accelerate investment, expand, and create value," Jaber said. "This move was not done in isolation," he said at the 'Make It In The Emirates' conference on the UAE industry. "It is part of a broader effort to reshape our economy and industrial base through a vision that connects energy, technology, and industry, aligning our resources with national priorities to build a stronger, more resilient economy." While the UAE is not the first country to leave Opec, it is by far the biggest producer to do so. The UAE has long been frustrated with Opec's quotas, which sought to cap Emirati production at 3.4 million barrels a day. Abu Dhabi seeks to expand the UAE's production capacity to five million barrels a day by 2027. On Sunday, Adnoc pledged to spend \$55 billion on new projects over the next two years. The added revenue from oil sales would allow the UAE to step up its investments in artificial intelligence and other high-tech sectors, some analysts have said.

NDMA warns of thunderstorms

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Monday issued a nationwide alert, warning that thunderstorms with rain and possible hail are expected across several regions within the next 12 to 24 hours, particularly in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, in line with forecasts issued earlier by the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC). According to the NDMA, the current weather pattern is consistent with its seasonal outlook released three to four months ago for the April-June period. In Punjab, strong winds, lightning and rain are likely in multiple districts, with isolated hailstorms expected. Cities including Islamabad, Murree, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Tala-gang, Gujranwala, Jhelum, Sialkot, Narowal, Layyah, Gujrat,

Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Lahore, Kasur, Mi-anwali, Sargodha, Jhang and Multan are expected to be affected. Similar conditions are forecast in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kalam, Mingora, Malakand, Bat-agram, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Nowshera, Peshawar, Mardan, Bajaur, Charsadda, Kohat, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank and Dera Ismail Khan, where gusty winds and thunderstorms may also bring hail in some areas. In Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir, rain with thunder is expected in Gilgit, Skardu, Ghanche, Hunza, Nagar, Ghizer, Diamer, Astore, Shigar and Kharmang, as well as Muzaffarabad, Neelum Valley, Bagh, Haveli, Poonch, Rawalakot, Kotli, Mirpur and Bhimber. The NDMA cautioned that rising temperatures could accelerate glacier and snow melt, increasing the risk of glacial lake outburst floods, flash floods and landslides, particularly in mountainous areas. Authorities have advised citizens to avoid visiting glacial lakes and unstable slopes, while travellers in hilly regions should expect possible disruptions. — APP

Asia-Pacific must build shared resilience: ADB President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Masato Kanda opened ADB's 59th Annual Meeting on Monday by urging Asia and the Pacific to "act together to develop together" through stronger cross-border connections that drive resilience and inclusive growth, said a press release by the bank received here. "The decisions we make at this new crossroads will secure the future for the next generation," Kanda told the meeting's opening session in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. "In this fragmented world, traditional and isolated development responses will fail. To survive and thrive in this new era, we must build deeply connected and resilient systems," he added. The 59th Annual Meeting of the ADB Board of Governors is being held from 3 to 6 May 2026 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, under the theme "Crossroads of Progress: Advancing the Region's Connected Future." The meeting brings together policymakers, private sector leaders, development partners, and innovators to advance practical solutions in regional connectivity, digital innovation, and development finance. In his remarks, Kanda underscored how shocks today travel rapidly across borders—through energy markets, supply chains, and digital networks—hitting communities that are least able to absorb them. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated regional solutions that go beyond national boundaries, he said. ADB is responding by scaling up investments and accelerating reforms that enable countries to integrate

infrastructure, markets, and institutions across Asia and the Pacific. Last year, the bank provided \$29.3 billion in financial support to the region, while implementing reforms that enable it to deliver assistance more quickly and at scale. On Sunday, ADB launched a \$70 billion program to build regional systems that will strengthen shared security and resilience in Asia and the Pacific. This includes a \$50 billion initiative to build a Pan-Asia Power Grid which aims to integrate renewable energy across borders, enhance energy security, and lower emissions; and a \$20 billion initiative designed to expand cross border digital connectivity and close the region's digital divide. ADB has moved decisively to provide crisis response for its members during the ongoing Middle East conflict, becoming the first development partner to offer financial support for affected countries, which are expected to face further heightened economic pressures. The bank projects growth in developing Asia and the Pacific to slow to 4.7% this year from 5.4% last year, while inflation is expected to accelerate to 5.2% from 3.0%, as prolonged disruptions from the conflict raise energy prices, tighten financial conditions, and weigh on economic activity across the region. Under an even more severe downside scenario of renewed conflict escalation, in which oil prices spike in May 2026 and remain even higher, growth in developing Asia and the Pacific could slow to 4.2% this year and 4.0% next year, while inflation could reach 7.4% in 2026. Kanda described ADB as "an anchor of stability" uniquely positioned to help steer the region through a time of geopolitical fragmentation, the devastating impacts of conflict, deep economic disruptions, and escalating environmental stress.





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