



# Islamabad POST

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**Pakistan response to any future attack will be intense**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Usman Tariq signed by Warwickshire**

Detailed News On Page-06

**Insurance Co. announced in Punjab**

Detailed News On Page-02

**Rubio says offensive is over**

## US, Iran 'close' to ending war

"We will close this very soon... we are getting close," source tells Reuters on Tehran-Washington deal

CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: The United States and Iran are closing in on an agreement on a one-page memorandum to end the war in the Gulf, a source said. The source said a report earlier by the US media outlet Axios on the proposed memorandum was accurate. The Axios report had cited two US officials and two other sources familiar with the discussions. "We will close this very soon. We are getting close," the source added. Last month, Pakistan hosted the war's only peace talks so far, and it has continued in that role of mediator, ferrying proposals between the sides. Reports of the possible agreement to end the war caused global oil prices to plunge, with benchmark Brent crude futures falling more than 8% to around \$100 a barrel LCOc1. Global share prices also leapt and bond yields fell on optimism of an end to a war that has disrupted energy supplies. The White House, the State Department and Iranian officials contacted by Reuters did not immediately respond to requests for comment. US news channel CNBC quoted a spokesperson from the Iranian foreign ministry as saying Tehran was evaluating a 14-point US proposal. Axios reported that the White House believed it was closing in on a one-page memorandum to end the war with Iran.

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## Trump halts Hormuz escort mission

CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday he would briefly pause an operation, labelled as "Project Freedom", to help escort ships through the Strait of Hormuz after a request from Pakistan and other countries, while citing "great progress" toward a comprehensive agreement with Iran. Hours earlier, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had outlined the effort that began on Monday to escort stranded tankers out of the Gulf. The strait has been virtually shut since the conflict began, blocking some 20% of world oil supplies and igniting a global energy crisis. "We have mutually agreed that, while the Blockade will remain in full force and effect, Project Freedom ... will be paused for a short period of time to see whether or not the Agreement can be finalised and signed," Trump wrote on social media. There was no immediate reaction from Tehran, where it was early on Wednesday morning. Following the announcement, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed gratitude to US President Trump for his "courageous leadership and timely announcement" regarding the pause in Project Freedom in the Strait of Hormuz. "President Trump's gracious response to the request made by Pakistan and other brotherly countries, particularly the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and my dear brother Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammed bin Salman, will go a long way towards advancing regional peace, stability and reconciliation during this sensitive period," he wrote on X. PM Shehbaz noted that Pakistan remains firmly committed to supporting all efforts that promote restraint and a peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy. "We are very hopeful that the current momentum will lead to a lasting agreement that secures durable peace and stability for the region and beyond," he added. Shortly after Trump's post, US crude oil futures fell \$2.30 and broke below \$100 per barrel, a much-watched threshold since the conflict sent energy prices soaring two months ago.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif participated in the Message of Islam Conference held in Islamabad. The Prime Minister also presented shields to the Saudi Ambassador, the Grand Mufti of Palestine and others. - DNA

**EU urged to act on West Bank**

NEWS DESK

PARIS: More than 400 former diplomats, ministers, and senior officials on Wednesday urged the European Union to "act now" against Israel's "illegal" settlements in the occupied West Bank. The open letter comes as Israel intends to move forward with E1, a new construction project covering around 12 square kilometers with some 3,400 housing units in the occupied West Bank. The move would further separate east Jerusalem, occupied and annexed by Israel and predominantly inhabited by Palestinians, from the West Bank. "The EU and its member states, together with partners, must take immediate action to deter Israel from further advancing its

Continued on Page 06

**Beijing to play greater role**

China welcomes Iran's pledge not to pursue nuclear weapons, says it has right to peaceful use of atomic energy

APP

BEIJING: China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Beijing would play a "greater role" in ending hostilities in the Middle East during talks with his Iranian counterpart on Wednesday, a week before US President Donald Trump is due to meet Xi Jinping. China is a key customer for Iranian oil, defying sanctions imposed by the US, and is directly affected by the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz bordered by Iran.

Continued on Page 06

**Middle East issue**

## Pakistan desires permanent end to US-Iran war: PM

The Prime Minister paid tribute to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for his role in peace talks. He said that China, Turkiye and other fraternal countries also contributed in this process

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said Pakistan desires a permanent end to the US-Iran war for peace in the region. Addressing the sixth International Paigham-e-Islam Conference in Islamabad, he strongly highlighted Pakistan's mediation efforts saying these led to the opening of doors of negotiations between the two sides. He expressed the confidence that the dialogue will soon turn into a sustainable peace in the region without loss of more human lives. Terming Pakistan's role as historic, the Prime Minister said history will always remember our efforts in golden words. He was appreciative of the efforts of Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defense Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for

Continued on Page 06

## PM welcomes Trump's decision

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday welcomed the announcement by US President Donald Trump regarding a pause in Project Freedom in the Strait of Hormuz at Pakistan's request. In a post on X, the prime minister expressed gratitude to President Trump for a courageous leadership and a timely decision to de-escalate tensions in the region. "I am grateful to President Donald Trump for his courageous leadership and timely announcement regarding the pause in

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

**India opens doors to Pak athletes**

SPORTS DESK

NEW DELHI: Pakistani players and teams will be able to participate in multilateral events hosted by India but bilateral events remain off the table, India's sports ministry has said. India also said the visa process for sports persons and officials will be simplified while office bearers of international sports governing bodies will be granted multi-entry visas. "With regard to international and multilateral events, in India or abroad, we are guided by the practices of international sports bodies and the interest of our own sports persons," the ministry said in a memorandum. "It is also relevant to take into account India's emergence as a credible venue to host international sports events."

**Hot weather to grip parts of Pakistan**

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast severe heatwave conditions across central and southern parts of the country from May 7 to 11, driven by the presence of a high-pressure system in the upper atmosphere. According to the Met Office, the heatwave will also extend to upper regions between May 8 and 10, with daytime temperatures expected to soar significantly above normal levels. Temperatures in parts of Sindh and Balochistan, including Dadu, Shaheed Benazirabad, Ghotki, Khairpur, Nausherozero, Jacobabad, Larkana, Sukkur, Sibbi, Turbat, and Panjgur, are likely to range between 46°C and 50°C. In southern and central Punjab as well as southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

## Security threats

## US announces phased closure of Consulate General in Peshawar

Department of State says decision reflects "commitment to ensuring the safety of diplomatic personnel"

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The US Department of State has announced the phased closure of its Consulate General in Peshawar, as the decision reflects a "commitment to ensuring the safety of diplomatic personnel". The State Department, in an official statement, also announced the shifting of responsibility for diplomatic engagement in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the US Embassy in Islamabad. It added that the decision reflects a "commitment to ensuring the safety of diplomatic personnel and improving resource management". Despite the closure, Washington stressed that its policy priorities in Pakistan remain unchanged. "While our physical presence in Peshawar is changing, the Administration's policy priorities in Pakistan remain

steadfast," it said. It said the US will continue engaging with officials and communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to promote economic ties, strengthen regional security, and advance mutual interests.

"We will continue to engage meaningfully with the people and officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to foster economic ties, promote regional security, and advance the interests of the American people."

The department added that the US Mission to Pakistan will continue its diplomatic work through its remaining posts in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore, reaffirming its commitment to the broader US-Pakistan relationship.

"The Department, through the US Mission to Pakistan, remains dedicated to advancing the US-Pakistan relationship through our remaining diplomatic posts in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore."

## Supreme Court, FCC have distinct jurisdictions, rules SC

Judgement clarifies post-27th Constitutional Amendment judicial structure



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan has ruled that the Supreme Court and the Federal Constitutional Court are "coordinate courts" operating within distinct constitutional jurisdictions, with neither institution subordinate to the other. The Federal Constitutional Court was established under the 27th Constitutional Amendment in November last year, with equal representation from all provinces. The judgment arises from a common decision

of the Peshawar High Court, in which both constitutional writ proceedings and regular civil proceedings had been clubbed together and subsequently brought before the Supreme Court. The SC ruled that writ and regular proceedings be separated and routed to their respective forums under the post-27th Constitutional Amendment framework. The bench held that constitutional "writ proceedings" arising under Article 199 of the Constitution now fall exclusively within the jurisdiction of the Federal Constitutional Court, while ordinary civil and regular appellate matters will continue to be heard by the Supreme Court under Article 185 of the Constitution. "All writ proceedings, except those relating to rent and family matters, are within the jurisdiction of the Federal Constitutional Court, whereas all regular proceedings are within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court," the judgment read. The SC observed that Article 175F, inserted through the 27th Constitutional Amendment, created a separate constitutional forum with specifically demarcated appellate powers. Under Article 175F, all appeals arising from High Court judgments passed under Article 199 stand transferred to the Federal Constitutional Court, except matters relating to rent and family disputes.

Continued on Page 06

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# Punjab CM introduces general, life insurance company

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif appreciated the business plan of Punjab Life and General Insurance Company and its fastest-ever approval process

DNA

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif highlighted while chairing a meeting on the establishment of Punjab General Insurance Company that Punjab has once again exceeded other provinces by becoming first in the country to introduce a general insurance company, a summary for which has been sent to the provincial cabinet for seeking approval. She noted that Punjab Life Insurance Company has also earned an honor of getting the fastest registration from SECP in the history of Pakistan. She said that Punjab Life Insurance Company will provide protection to citizens of every class and income level in Punjab by introducing specialized insurance plans for dependents, family members, women, transgender persons, farmers, students, and overseas Pakistanis. She added that through natural disaster coverage, pension products, health insurance for the deserving, and Sharia-compliant Takaful, finan-

cial protection will be provided to every segment of society. She underscored that recruitment of 17 professional experts for Punjab Life Insurance Company, and its financial backing has been completed; and operations have commenced. Chief Minister Punjab said that CEO of Punjab Life Insurance Company will also serve as the CEO of Punjab General Insurance Company. Authorities convened gave her a detailed briefing on matters related to Punjab Life Insurance Company and Punjab General Insurance Company. Chief Minister Punjab formed a special committee for Punjab General Insurance Company; which will be responsible for the non-life insurance of all government institutions under the supervision of Finance Department, besides also including private sector in the insurance plan. She directed the relevant authorities to present a comprehensive health insurance policy plan, and said that a board for Punjab General Insurance Company, comprising Chairman P&D, Secretary

Finance, and President of Punjab Bank will be constituted. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif appreciated the business plan of Punjab Life and General Insurance Company and its fastest-ever approval process. She was briefed by the relevant authorities that Punjab Life Insurance Company is moving towards managing Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's health initiatives and health facility program, as it is continuing collaboration with institutions to create schemes for government employees' workers' welfare fund, pension fund for pensioners' insurance coverage, and schemes for citizens. She said that Punjab was ahead in reforms before, is ahead today, and will, Insha'Allah, always remain ahead. She added that they will bring such a health insurance policy that would allow anyone to get treatment wherever they wish in the world. She flashed that insurance sector is growing around the world; we must keep pace with the world. She directed all the stakeholders to ensure infrastructure and provision of resources.



FAISALABAD: Chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Pakistan, Khateeb and Imam of Badshahi Mosque Lahore and Ambassador of Peace Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabeer Azad addressing "Marka-e-Haq Bunyan-um-Marsoos and Istehkam-e-Pakistan Conference" at Chenab Club.

## KP CM inaugurates uplift projects in Mansehra

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Khan Afridi on Wednesday inaugurated and performed groundbreaking for 12 major development projects worth over Rs. 25 billion during his visit to Mansehra district. The projects were aimed at improving basic public services and accelerating overall development in the area, with particular emphasis on clean drinking water, healthcare, education, and sports facilities. The initiatives were expected to enhance the quality of life for residents and to bring underdeveloped areas into the mainstream. Key projects included the Rs. 18.5 billion Mansehra Gravity Flow Water Supply Scheme, Rs. two billion Institute of Allied Health Sciences, Rs. 1.8 billion Achhar Nala Dam, and Rs. one billion Thakra Stadium upgrade project. Other initiatives comprised the upgradation of BHU Sandesar, establishment of a Rescue Station at Pano Dheri, inauguration of a Degree College for Boys, and laying the foundation stone for a Cath Lab. Additionally, land has been allocated for a graveyard, while projects including the establishment of Kotkay Park, Mansehra Water Supply Scheme, and creation of Tehsil Tanawal were also part of the development package. Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the Chief Minister said these projects were a gift for the people of Mansehra and would bring tangible improvements in their daily lives.—APP

## Marka-e-Haq proves no one dares undermine Pak's sovereignty: Nehal

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Syed Nehal Hashmi has paid glowing tribute to the nation and the armed forces on the completion of one year of "Marka-e-Haq," asserting that any attempt to undermine Pakistan's sovereignty will be met with a united and resolute response. In an interview with APP, Governor Hashmi said that a year ago, Pakistan's armed forces, under the command of the Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, strongly and effectively responded to Indian aggression, proving to the world that India sponsors terrorism. He said Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif, along with the armed forces, including the Army, Air Force and the Navy, gave a crushing reply that forced India to halt hostilities. He added that Pakistan demonstrated its defence capabilities by destroying enemy aircraft during the conflict. The governor noted that following the victory, General Asim Munir was elevated to the rank of Field Marshal in recognition of his commanding role, while Pakistan gained international recognition and strengthened its diplomatic standing. Syed Nehal Hashmi said the success of Marka-e-Haq enhanced Pakistan's

global image and proved that national unity can overcome any challenge. He added that although there was a perception between 2018 and 2022 that Pakistan was internationally isolated, the situation changed after May 2025 as Pakistan effectively presented its stance to the world. He said Pakistan intensified diplomatic outreach to friendly countries, particularly in the Islamic world, as well as Western nations, conveying that it had been subjected to aggression and has long been a victim of terrorism fueled by external interference, a position acknowledged globally.—APP

## Inclusion of Girl's schools solarisation

PESHAWAR: The Rise and Shine Girls Education Leadership Network has called on the government to include a dedicated scheme for solarisation of all girls' secondary schools across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) of upcoming fiscal year 2026-2027. In government schools, persistent electricity shortages and frequent power outages continue to disrupt classroom learning environment. This electricity disruption significantly impacts students' concentration levels and classroom engagement, undermining the learning outcomes. The situation is particularly severe in rural and climate-vulnerable regions, where girls already face multiple barriers to quality education, further deepening existing educational disparities. "The provision of electricity is not a luxury, but a fundamental educational facility for ensuring conducive and enabling learning environments for girls. Without electricity, classrooms become uncomfortable spaces, directly affecting students' ability to concentrate, participate and learn effectively," stated, Anum Jamil, member of the Rise and Shine Girls Education Leadership Network. "Many girls travel long distances to reach school, often without access to a reliable transportation facility, carrying heavy school bags under extreme heat. After enduring this journey, the absence of electricity throughout the school day makes the learning even more difficult.—APP

### CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my daughter's name from Syeda Zoneesha to Syeda Zunaira Fatima. From now on, she shall be written and called by this new name. Alias: Syed Shahzaib Zaidi CNIC Number: 37405-5925088-1

## Governor Kundi calls for proactive climate action

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday underscored the urgent need to shift from reactive to proactive, risk-informed climate responses, as district climate adaptation plans for Charsadda and Karak were launched. He said this in an event organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) here at a local hotel. Addressing the ceremony as chief guest, the Governor Faisal Karim Kundi appreciated the joint efforts of MoCC, SDPI, UNEP and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Planning and Development Department for developing the plans. He said climate change is no longer a distant threat but a present-day reality affecting farmers, infrastructure and daily life across the province and the country. He termed the district adaptation plans timely and comprehensive, saying that they go beyond conventional frameworks by offering practical, implementable recommendations. He highlighted that the plans adopt an integrated approach covering agriculture, disaster risk reduction, conservation, human capital development and social inclusion. "As Governor, I reiterate the government's commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development," he said, urging all stakeholders to ensure that these plans are translated into concrete action on

the ground through collective efforts. Earlier, Aisha Humera Chaudhary, Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, in her opening remarks said the district plans are aligned with Pakistan's National Adaptation Plan, ensuring that national climate priorities are translated into localized, actionable strategies. She emphasized that climate action must move beyond policy centers to the communities most affected, adding that adaptation planning should be guided by measurable indicators to ensure accountability and tangible impact. She reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to supporting provinces with technical expertise, tools and institutional backing to implement effective adaptation measures. Muhammad Nadir Khan Rana, Special Secretary, Planning and Development Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, highlighted the significance of selecting Charsadda and Karak, saying that the two districts represent distinct climate challenges, flood vulnerability and water scarcity. He said climate change is increasingly affecting agriculture, health, water resources and economic stability, stressing that resilience requires long-term planning rather than emergency responses. He added that the adaptation plans provide a structured pathway to integrate climate resilience into development planning and budgeting.—DNA

## Public hearing to address people concerns

PESHAWAR: The Medical Teaching Institution (MTI) Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC) on Wednesday organized its second E-Khuli Kachehri (public hearing) providing a platform for citizens, patients, and hospital staff to directly engage with the administration and raise key issues. The session was held in line with the directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, aiming to promote transparency and improve service delivery in public sector hospitals. Hospital Director Dr. Gulzar Ahmad Khan and Director Nursing Barkat Khan led the forum and responded to a wide range of queries. Participants highlighted concerns regarding the new Emergency Block, staff salaries, promotions, recruitment procedures, online appointment system, laboratory reporting, medical boards, and emergency services. The administration assured that all matters are being handled in accordance with established rules, human resource policies, and merit. Briefing the participants, Hospital Director Dr. Gulzar Ahmad Khan said that construction work on the new Emergency Block has largely been completed and the facility would soon be operational following the provision of necessary biomedical equipment, funds, and workforce. He noted that the block would be equipped with modern intensive care units, including medical, surgical, and pediatric ICUs, to significantly enhance emergency care services. Director Nursing Barkat Khan informed that the issue of IBP nurses' salaries has already been approved by the Board of Governors and would be resolved after completion of remaining financial and administrative formalities. The hospital administration reiterated its commitment to maintaining high standards in emergency, diagnostic, and treatment services, adding that public complaints would continue to be addressed on a priority basis through such interactive forums.

## Babar Ornate — The voice of elegance

With his popular hit — London Ki Mehki Hawa

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On a breezy London evening, the city's lights shimmered against the Thames, and somewhere in a tucked-away studio, Babar Ornate was weaving melodies that carried both the scent of nostalgia and the thrill of modern romance. Known for his ability to blend genres effortlessly, Babar has emerged as one of the most distinctive voices in today's independent music scene. Babar Ornate, a singer, composer, and lyricist, has carved a unique niche in the modern music landscape. With works like London Ki Mehki Hawa and the upcoming Lakhon Mein Tum Pasand Aye, he blends British ambience with South Asian sensibilities, creating a sound that is both globally appealing and deeply personal. Some artists chase trends; others create them. Babar Ornate belongs to the rare breed who transcends both. His music is not just a collection of notes — it's an emotional language, a bridge between cultures, and a testament to the timeless power of melody. The Journey Babar Ornate's rise is a story of persistence, experimentation, and a refusal to be boxed into a single genre. From his early days experimenting



with acoustic arrangements to producing lush, cinematic soundscapes, his work reflects a deep understanding of both Eastern and Western musical traditions. His breakout track London Ki Mehki Hawa showcased his signature style—romantic, atmospheric, and layered with intricate instrumenta-

tion. The song's composition and lyrical depth revealed an artist who values storytelling as much as melody. Musical Style & Influences Babar's music often blends, romantic lyricism with poetic imagery, western orchestration with South Asian melodic sensibilities, ambient textures that create a cinematic listening experience. He draws inspiration from 90s melodic era film scores, and even contemporary pop, resulting in a sound that feels both familiar and refreshingly new. Beyond the Studio On social media platforms, Babar shares glimpses of his creative process — whether it's a late-night jam session or a candid conversation about the emotions behind a song. His upcoming release, Tum Ho Dharkan Mein, promises to explore deeper emotional territory, continuing his tradition of heartfelt storytelling. Impact & Future In an era where music is often consumed in fleeting moments, Babar Ornate's work invites listeners to slow down and immerse themselves. His ability to merge cultural influences positions him as a bridge between audiences, and his growing international fanbase suggests that his journey is only beginning. Closing Thought Babar Ornate is not just making songs — he's crafting experiences.

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### MAY

May 03/Poland National Day
May 06/Bulgaria Armed Forces Day
May 06/UAE Armed Forces Day
May 07/Kazakhstan Armed Forces Day
May 08/Czech Republic National Day
May 09/European Union National Day
May 17/Norway Constitution Day
May 21/Hungary Armed Forces Day
May 22/Yemen Republic National Day
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
Cantt Hospital..9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



### Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3



### Islamabad Metropolitan

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480
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# CNS for constant combat readiness amid ME tension

The Naval Chief further underscored Pakistan Navy's pivotal role in ensuring peace, stability and regional maritime security. He highlighted that PN is providing assurance to maritime community through its presence in GOO



### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Command & Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy concluded at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. The conference was chaired by Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M), T Bt, Chief of the Naval Staff, and attended by Principal Staff Officers and Field Com-

manders. During the conference, Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized on maintaining perpetual combat readiness against traditional & non-traditional challenges in the maritime domain. In the backdrop of ongoing situation in the Middle East, he noted emerging threats in the maritime domain including freedom of naviga-

tion, potential disruption to vital Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) and volatile maritime security situation across strategic choke-points. Admiral Naveed Ashraf stressed on acquiring niche and cutting-edge technologies as an absolute strategic necessity for Pakistan Navy. The Naval Chief further underscored Pakistan Navy's piv-

otal role in ensuring peace, stability and regional maritime security. He highlighted that PN is providing assurance to maritime community through its presence in GOO. The forum also commemorated the first anniversary of MARKA-E-HAQ, paying tribute to the sacrifices made during the May 2025 conflict. The Naval Chief remarked

the historic triumph as an enduring testament to national unity and unwavering resolve to defeat any external aggression with iron fist. The forum undertook a comprehensive review of the operational preparedness, ongoing initiatives and upcoming events. Discussions remained focused on aligning naval priorities with evolving regional maritime security

imperatives to chart a clear course for Operations preparedness across multiple domains of naval warfare. The Command and Staff Conference is the apex decision-making forum of Pakistan Navy where Chief of the Naval Staff, Principal Staff Officers and Field Commanders deliberate on strategic priorities and policies.

## MoU to boost academic collaboration in emerging tech

ISLAMABAD: The signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Smart Forum to promote academic and industry collaboration in emerging technologies, particularly 5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The MoU signing ceremony was held at FUUAST Islamabad in the presence of senior university officials, faculty members, and representatives of Smart Forum. The agreement aims to strengthen capacity building, professional training, and industry-oriented learning opportunities for students and faculty members. Under ... ISLAMABAD, May 06 (APP):The signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Smart Forum to promote academic and industry collaboration in emerging technologies, particularly 5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The MoU signing ceremony was held at FUUAST Islamabad in the presence of senior university officials, faculty members, and representatives of Smart Forum. The agreement aims to strengthen capacity building, professional training, and industry-oriented learning opportunities for students and faculty members. Under the MoU, Smart Forum, in collaboration with Qualcomm Wireless Academy (QWA), will facilitate training programs, certification opportunities, and access to advanced learning resources in the areas of 5G and Artificial Intelligence. The collaboration will particularly benefit students from Electrical Engineering, Software Engineering, Artificial Intelligence, and Computer Science disciplines. The agreement also provides opportunities for showcasing selected Final Year Projects (FYPs) to enhance student innovation, visibility, and employability, while ensuring compliance with academic and ethical standards and protection of intellectual property rights. Speaking on the occasion, the Vice Chancellor of FUUAST, Zabta Khan Shinwari appreciated the initiative and emphasized the importance of academia-industry collaboration in preparing students for future technological challenges and opportunities. Representatives of Smart Forum also highlighted their commitment to supporting higher education institutions through advanced technological training and capacity-building initiatives. The MoU was signed by Engr. Dr. Rahat Ullah, Incharge Dean, Faculty of Engineering, FUUAST Islamabad, and Mr. Khalid Khan, Chief Executive Officer, Smart Forum. The collaboration is expected to open new avenues for academic growth, professional development, and technological innovation for students and faculty members of FUUAST.—APP

## Paigham-e-Islam conference concludes

ISLAMABAD :The Sixth International Paigham-e-Islam Conference concluded here on Wednesday with a strong call for national security, unity of the , and enhanced interfaith harmony, according to a joint declaration issued at the end of the proceedings. The conference, organized by the Pakistan Ulema Council in collaboration with the International Tazem-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, was held at the Jinnah Convention Centre High officials and dignitaries including Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed Ishaq Dar, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Pakistan, Dr. Zuhair Mohammad Hamdallah Zaid, Grand Mufti of Palestine Sheikh Muhammad Ahmad Hussein and Chief Justice of Palestine Dr. Mahmoud Al-Habbash, senior Saudi and Palestinian representatives, religious scholars, and international delegates attended the conference. Addressing a press conference along with a number of Ulema and Mashaikh from various schools of thought at the conclusion of this mega event, Prime Minister's Coordinator for National Paigham-e-Aman Committee and Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, reaffirmed full support for the government, armed forces, and national security institutions, acknowledging their efforts in safeguarding the country and congratulating the nation on recent achievements particularly triumph victory in Marka-e-Haq, Bunyan-ul-Marsous which first anniversary was being celebrated across the nation and Pakistan's diaspora abroad. He emphasized upon the need for unity and cohesion within the Muslim Ummah, endorsing Pakistan's stance on regional issues, including its position regarding Iran and relations with Arab and Islamic countries. He strongly condemned attacks on Iran attributed to the United States and Israel, while also expressed concern over strikes targeting Arab countries, terming them detrimental to regional stability. Highlighting defence cooperation, Ashrafi described the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia strategic partnership as a significant development for the Muslim world, noting that such collaboration could contribute to strengthening collective security among Islamic nations. He also announced that the Seventh International Paigham-e-Islam Conference would be held in March 2027.—APP

## Govt plans to generate 500MW from Keenjhar lake

The project is also expected to create employment opportunities during construction and technical operations phases. Aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 7, 9, and 13, the initiative underscores Pakistan's commitment to renewable energy expansion, industrial decarbonisation, and climate resilience

ISLAMABAD: The government planned a 500-megawatt floating solar power project at the Keenjhar Lake in Sindh for the generation of clean, renewable energy to support the country's growing energy needs while reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels. According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the \$243.63 million project will generate around 861.91 gigawatt-hours of electricity annually, with a capacity factor of 19.6%, and supply power to K-Electric under a long-term Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). The initiative is aligned with Pakistan's 2030 emission reduction goals. The project will be executed through the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) model, selected through competitive bidding. The authorities have already secured a Letter of Intent (LoI) from K-Electric, while the bidding process for EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) contractors is underway. The floating solar facility is located near major industrial zones, allowing efficient transmission of green electricity to the high-demand areas. Unlike conventional solar plants, the project will utilize water surfaces, avoiding land-use conflicts and enhancing energy efficiency. The project offers 13.94% internal rate of return (IRR), with a tariff estimated at 3.98 US cents per kilowatt-hour. The investment structure includes \$182.72 million in debt financing and \$60.91 million in equity. The funds will be utilized for EPC development, transmission infrastructure, and operations and maintenance (O&M). The project is also expected to create employment opportunities during construction and technical operations phases. Aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 7, 9, and 13, the initiative underscores Pakistan's commitment to renewable energy expansion, industrial decarbonisation, and climate resilience.—DNA

## Twin cities Safe City to be linked for faster crime tracking

He warned that negligence in duties would not be tolerated under any circumstances, adding that protection of citizens' lives and property remained the top priority of Islamabad Police

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police and Rawalpindi police have decided to interlink their Safe City systems to strengthen crime tracing and ensure faster response against criminal activities, particularly vehicle theft cases. An official told on Wednesday that the decision was taken during a meeting between SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza and SSP Safe City Rawalpindi Aamna Baig. He said Assistant Director Safe City Islamabad Abbas Mehdi and other officers also attended the meeting. The official said detailed discussions were held regarding crime tracing and measures to resolve vehicle theft cases within the shortest possible time. He said both sides agreed that interconnecting the Safe City systems of Islamabad and Rawalpindi would improve real-time coordination, quick response and effectiveness of joint operations. The official said emphasis was laid on ensuring 24-hour monitoring and strengthening coordination between police of both districts to ensure swift arrest of criminal elements and protection of citizens' lives and property. He said SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza later chaired a separate meeting of zonal SSPs to review law and order, crime prevention and security measures across the city. The meeting was attended by SP Saddar Zone Kazim Naqvi, SP Sawan Zone Muhammad Khuram Ashraf, SP City Zone Dr. Ayaz Hussain, SP Rural Zone Zeeshan Ali, SP Industrial Area Zone Hasnain Waris and other officers. SSP Qazi Ali Raza directed officers to conclude under-investigation cases at the earliest and utilize all available resources to arrest suspects involved in murder and attempted murder cases. He said targeted operations were ordered against proclaimed offenders, active gangs, drug dealers, illegal arms holders and land-grabbing mafias. SSP also directed officers to make patrolling more effective and ensure visible presence of all patrol units in the field. He warned that negligence in duties would not be tolerated under any circumstances, adding that protection of citizens' lives and property remained the top priority of Islamabad Police.—DNA

## RCCI, CPO discuss business community issues

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has raised key issues facing the city's traders community. The chamber expressed its concerns regarding PERA force's actions against traders. According to the details, a delegation of RCCI, led by its President Usman Shaukat, called on City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani and discussed issues including the Chamber-Police Coordination Committee, alternate dispute resolution mechanisms, market timings, smart lockdown concerns, traffic management and complaints regarding alleged harassment by the PERA force. The CPO assured full cooperation in addressing the concerns of the business community, emphasizing the importance of strong coordination between police and traders.—APP

## Naqvi orders feasibility plan for Simly Dam expansion

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a detailed visit to the Simly Dam on Wednesday where he was briefed on the proposed expansion of the reservoir

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a detailed visit to the Simly Dam on Wednesday where he was briefed on the proposed expansion of the reservoir. Officials informed the minister that Simly Dam currently supplies 40 percent of Islamabad's water, making its expansion vital for meeting the capital's growing demand. After the briefing, Minister Naqvi directed authorities to prepare a practical and comprehensive plan for the dam's expansion at the earliest. He said that increasing the dam's capacity would ensure an abundant and reliable water supply for residents of the federal capital. Minister Naqvi also inspected the surrounding areas of the dam and sought a development plan to promote recreational activities in the region. He noted that the areas adjacent to Simly Dam offer significant potential for recreation and tourism, including water sports and other outdoor activities. "Promoting recreational activities will lead to development in the region and create employment opportunities for local residents," he added. He said that citizens would gain access to international-standard recreational facilities once the area is properly developed. The visit was attended by the Chairman CDA, Inspector General Islamabad Police, and other senior officials.—DNA

## Pakistani couple begins smooth Hajj journey

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani pilgrim Muhammad Afzal and his wife began their long-awaited Hajj journey through the Makkah Route Initiative lounge at Lahore Airport, where advanced facilities and smooth procedures eased the stress of travel for the couple after two decades of waiting to fulfill their dream. According to SPA, the couple's journey marked the culmination of 20 years of patience, sacrifice and devotion, during which they consistently placed their spiritual goal above worldly comforts. Upon entering the initiative's dedicated lounge at the airport, the stress and anxiety usually associated with travel gave way to a smooth and organized process supported by advanced technology and streamlined procedures. The report said the calm expressions on the couple's faces reflected the story of a family that had made Hajj a lifelong aspiration, a journey built on years of perseverance, faith, and selflessness that would remain a lasting memory for their children.—APP

## Large-scale manufacturing grows by 11.09 % in March

ISLAMABAD: The output of the Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) recorded a growth of 11.09 per cent during the month of March 2026 as compared to the same month of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. On a month-on-month basis, the LSMI production in March 2026 decreased by 5.19 per cent when compared with February 2026, according to the PBS data. Overall, the large-scale manufacturing sector posted a growth of 6.48 per cent during the period July-March 2025-26 as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The provisional quantum index of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) for March 2026, with the base year 2015-16, has been developed on the basis of the latest data supplied by the source agencies. The main contributors towards overall growth of 6.48% are Food (1.79), Tobacco (0.18), Textile (0.13) Garments (1.08), Petroleum Products (0.79), Chemicals (-0.11), Pharmaceuticals (-0.31), Cement (0.50), Iron & Steel Products (-0.27), Electrical Equipment (0.30), Machinery and Equipment (-0.03), Automobiles (1.50), Other transport Equipment (0.24), and Furniture (0.26). The production in July-March 2025-26 has posted growth in Food, Beverages, Tobacco, Textile, wearing apparel, Paper & Board, Coke & Petroleum Products, Rubber Products, Non Metallic Mineral Products, Fabricated Metal, Computer, electronics.—APP

## Briefs

## Railways steps up safety measures

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has initiated a wide-ranging set of measures aimed at enhancing passenger safety, preventing accidents and modernizing its aging infrastructure. "The regular training programmes, refresher courses, safety seminars and workshops are being conducted at divisional levels as well as at the Railway Academy to improve the skills and safety awareness of operational staff," an official told APP. He said the initiatives are designed to strengthen the overall safety culture within the department. To ensure strict adherence to safety protocols, inspections are being carried out by officers and senior staff in line with prescribed quotas. Additionally, Safety Bulletins and a monthly advisory titled "Rule of the Month" are being circulated regularly to guide employees on operational best practices, he said. He said that as part of ongoing accident-prevention efforts, authorities have intensified inspections of level crossings. —APP

## Govt strengthens coordination with provinces on CPF

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Cheema, said here on Wednesday that the federal government was working in close coordination with all provincial governments to ensure the effective achievement of the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) objectives. The minister was talking to Country Director of the World Bank, Bolormaa Amgaabazar, who called on him here, according to press release issued by Ministry of Economic Affairs. According to the press release, the discussion focused on the key outcomes of CPF, a 10-year Framework for Pakistan (FY2026–FY2035), with a support of US\$20 billion for development projects and reform programs. They also discussed programs aimed at reducing child stunting through the provision of clean water, improved sanitation systems, better healthcare, and proper nutrition. Climate resilience also featured prominently, with a focus on mitigating the impacts of floods and other climate-related risks, while ensuring food and nutrition security within the context of the water-agriculture nexus. The transition toward cleaner and more sustainable energy systems, along with improved air quality, was also focused as priority area. Cheema noted that all these areas fall under both federal and provincial jurisdiction and stated that the federal government and all provincial governments are on board and remain committed to implementing the CPF and achieving its intended outcomes. —APP

## SHOs to be held responsible for crimes in their limits

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza chaired a late-night meeting of zonal SPs, SDPOs and SHOs, assigning multiple tasks to further improve security and crime control in the federal capital. An official told on Wednesday that the SSP Qazi directed officers to ensure protection of citizens' lives and property and intensify indiscriminate action against active gangs involved in heinous crimes. SSP Qazi warned that any incident occurring within the limits of a police station would be the responsibility of the concerned SHO. SSP directed strict action against land grabbers, illegal arms holders and those involved in display of weapons. Officers were also instructed to accelerate the "Nasha Ab Nahi" campaign and launch an effective crackdown against drug peddlers. SSP Qazi Operations ordered immediate action for arrest of active gangs, proclaimed offenders and previously record-holder criminals involved in serious crimes. —APP

## PIDE seminar highlights urgent need for industrial transformation

Dr. Masood opened the seminar by emphasizing that sustainable economic growth depends on a competitive industrial sector capable of producing goods that meet global standards in both quality and price, while remaining integrated into international supply chains

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) organized a seminar on "Industrial Competitiveness in Pakistan" today in Islamabad, featuring Usman Khan, Deputy Team Lead – REMIT and Director of the Technology for People Initiative (TPI) at LUMS, as the keynote speaker. The session was moderated by Dr. Amjad Masood, Chief of Research and Director of CEI, PIDE, and was also attended virtually by participants from across the country. Dr. Masood opened the seminar by emphasizing that sustainable economic growth depends on a competitive industrial sector capable of producing goods that meet global standards in both quality and price, while remaining integrated into international supply chains. He underscored the critical role of innovation, technology,

and industrial transformation in shaping Pakistan's economic future. In his address, Usman Khan highlighted that despite the global focus on digitalization and services, manufacturing remains a central driver of economic growth, employment generation, and export competitiveness. He observed that Pakistan, once ahead of countries such as Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, and South Korea in GDP per capita and exports, has gradually lost its economic edge. Over the past several decades, the industrial sector has stagnated, and labor has shifted directly from agriculture to low-productivity informal services instead of transitioning through manufacturing, a phenomenon he described as premature deindustrialization, adversely affecting youth employment, export diversification, and long-term productivity. Mr. Khan noted that Pakistan's export basket remains narrow and heavily

dependent on low-value-added products, particularly textiles and primary commodities, with limited diversification into advanced sectors like electronics and machinery. He stressed that modern exports are increasingly driven by capabilities and innovation rather than products alone, making human capital development and technical skills critical for competitiveness. The seminar examined structural and policy constraints hindering industrial growth, including high energy costs, policy inconsistency, limited access to credit, burdensome taxation and regulation, low investment in research and development, and weak institutional support. Mr. Khan emphasized that effective industrial policy should go beyond short-term subsidies to focus on productivity enhancement, technological upgrading, worker training, strategic sector support, and active engagement in glob-

al value chains. He also highlighted lessons from global experience, emphasizing the strategic use of tariffs, foreign direct investment, state-owned enterprises, and public-private dialogue to create globally competitive firms, foster innovation, and drive export growth. Mr. Khan noted emerging opportunities in sectors such as electric vehicles, where Pakistan can leverage existing capabilities to participate in global production networks without overextending into fully finished product manufacturing. The seminar concluded with an engaging discussion on the future of industrial policy, youth employment, technology adoption, and Pakistan's path toward a more competitive, diversified, and resilient economy. PIDE reaffirmed its commitment to fostering research, dialogue, and evidence-based policy recommendations to strengthen Pakistan's industrial base and ensure sustainable economic growth.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Information Commissioner Shoaib Siddique along with member/Information Commission presenting bi-annual report of Pakistan Information Commission to Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani.

## HEC finalises curriculum for Bachelor of occupational therapy

DNA

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan has finalised the curriculum of the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy programme, integrating the emerging domains and professional competencies required for occupational therapists in the modern healthcare. The HEC, in collaboration with the Allied Health Professional Council (AHPC), convened the National Curriculum Review Committee (NCRC) meeting, bringing together experts from leading universities offering Occupational Therapy programmes, industry representatives, and members of AHPC. The activity, hosted by Ziauddin University, Karachi, was chaired by Prof. Dr. Ashfaq Ahmed, Dean Allied Health Sciences, University of Lahore, as Convener, while Ms. Neelum Zehra, Principal, College of Occupational Therapy, Ziauddin University, served as Co-Convener. HEC was represented by Mr. Hakim Ali Talpur, Director Academics, and Mr. Hidayatullah Kasi, Deputy Director (Curriculum) alongside AHPC representatives including Prof. Dr. Hafiz Abdul Manan, Federal Member AHPC, Mr. Muhammad Ismail Jaskani, Sindh Member AHPC, and Dr. Ibrar Rafique, Secretary AHPC. During the

proceedings, the committee undertook a comprehensive review of existing curricula offered by different institutions and deliberated on academic standards including eligibility criteria, nomenclature, disciplinary and lab requirements in alignment with HEC Undergraduate Education Policy, the Allied Health framework, industry needs, and international best practices. Following extensive deliberations, the committee finalised the curriculum for the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (AHS) programme. The scheme incorporates strengthened supervised clinical practice and integrates the emerging domains and professional competencies for occupational therapists. This structure would better accommodate the required breadth of theoretical knowledge, depth of clinical training, and evolving professional competencies in line with international practices and guidelines, including those advocated by global professional bodies such as the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT). The Allied Health Professional Council (AHPC) endorsed the proposed structure, particularly the standardised clinical training framework. The finalised curriculum is expected to enhance the quality and uniformity of occupational therapy education in Pakistan and prepare competent professionals to contribute effectively within their defined scope of practice.

## Unity, resilience key to success of Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos

A large number of citizens from different walks of life attended the conference, including head of Jamiat Ulema-e-Ahle-Sunnat Pakistan and Chairman District Peace Committee Hafiz Muhammad Iqbal Rizvi and President Pasban-e-Watan Pakistan Shehzar Dilawar Khan

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry on Wednesday said that "Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos" had emerged as a symbol of national unity, resilience and defensive strength. Addressing the "Jashan e Bunyan-um-Marsoos- Pak Fauz Zindabad Conference" as chief guest, he said the success of the operation was driven by the professional capabilities of the armed forces, leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and the strategy of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. A large number of citizens from different walks of life attended the conference, including head of Jamiat Ulema-e-Ahle-Sunnat Pakistan and Chairman District Peace Committee Hafiz Muhammad Iqbal Rizvi and President Pasban-e-Watan Pakistan Shehzar Dilawar Khan. Danyal said that Pakistan not only responded effectively on the military front during Marka-e-Haq but also established its superiority in narrative and diplomatic domains. Referring to the events of May 7 last year, he highlighted that India, contrary to its claims of targeting militant

hideouts, had attacked innocent civilians, resulting in the martyrdom of 31 Pakistanis and injuries to 57 others, including women and children. He termed the act a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and said the country responded through "Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos" by targeting enemy military installations, demonstrating that Pakistan was a responsible yet strong defensive power. He said the entire nation stood united beyond political and religious differences alongside the armed forces, thwarting the enemy's designs. Danyal while lauding commendable performance by Pakistan's forces said the armed forces, with the support of the people, displayed exceptional professionalism and delivered a response that would be remembered for years, adding that the success was the result of sacrifices rendered by martyrs. He said martyrs were a guiding light for the nation while veterans were national heroes, adding that Pakistan had emerged stronger after Marka-e-Haq and symbolized stability in the region. Speakers, including Hafiz Muhammad Iqbal Rizvi and Shehzar Dilawar, also paid rich tribute to the sacrifices of the armed forces and termed national unity as the country's real strength.

## Police put injured dacoit in handcuffs

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested an injured member of a dacoit gang after an exchange of fire during a search operation in Khanna police station limits, while his accomplices managed to flee from the scene. An official told APP on Wednesday that a police team was conducting a search operation after receiving information regarding the presence of criminal elements in the area. He said armed dacoits hiding in the area opened indiscriminate fire on the police team as soon as they spotted the officers. The official said police personnel remained safe due to timely protective measures. —APP

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## OIC-COMSTECH, ALECSO sign MoU

ISLAMABAD: The OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at promoting cooperation in science, education, technology and innovation among member states. The agreement was signed at the COMSTECH by Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH Prof Dr M. Iqbal Choudhary and Director-General of ALECSO Prof Dr Mohamed Ould Amar in the presence of senior officials from both organisations. The MoU seeks to strengthen institutional collaboration through joint educational and scientific programmes, exchange of expertise, and coordinated initiatives in areas of mutual interest. Under the agreement, both organisations will collaborate in organising regional and international conferences, workshops, seminars, exhibitions and training programmes focusing on science, technology and higher education. The two sides also agreed to launch a number of specialised initiatives aimed at addressing emerging challenges in education and scientific development. These include the "Science in Exile" programme designed to support researchers and scientists from crisis-affected countries, as well as scholarship and fellowship opportunities for Arab women researchers. Another important area of cooperation includes joint efforts to highlight the scientific contributions of scholars from the Golden Age of Arab and Islamic civilisation through educational and cultural initiatives. The agreement further envisages collaboration to improve the international ranking, visibility and academic impact of Arab universities through research networking, academic partnerships and institutional support. Special emphasis has also been placed on digital transformation in education. Both organisations agreed to promote distance learning platforms, digital skills initiatives and technology-driven educational programmes aimed at expanding access to quality learning opportunities. As part of the cooperation framework, COMSTECH and ALECSO will also work on specialised training programmes for teachers with disabilities, including educators working with deaf and blind students. Speaking on the occasion, Prof Dr M. Iqbal Choudhary described the agreement as an important step towards strengthening scientific. —APP

## Trump's Failed Epic Fury and Triumph of Iran's Resilience



QAMAR BASHIR

WHAT began as "Epic Fury," a forceful and ambitious operation aimed at reshaping Iran's strategic capabilities, has now transitioned into "Project Freedom," a mission focused on safeguarding maritime routes and restoring the flow of energy through the Strait of Hormuz. Yet this shift reveals a striking contradiction at the heart of the entire conflict. The very waterway now being secured at enormous cost was open and functioning before the war began, exposing a troubling paradox in both purpose and execution. What emerges is not strategic brilliance but an anomaly—first creating a crisis, then deploying vast resources to resolve it. In that sense, "Project Freedom" appears less like a victory and more like a costly correction of an avoidable mistake, raising profound questions about judgment, foresight, and accountability.

The official admission of the defeat has been delivered with confidence. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio insisted that the objectives of the operation were achieved and that the United States will now rely on economic and diplomatic pressure to influence Iran's nuclear trajectory. Faced with these realities, the narrative has shifted. What was initially framed as a mission to dismantle Iran's nuclear program is now being reinterpreted as an effort to weaken its "conventional shield." This evolving justification reflects not strategic clarity, but the difficulty of reconciling ambitious promises with limited outcomes. In modern warfare, such redefinitions of success often reveal the admission of defeat rather than its victory. Yet the true consequences of this conflict extend far beyond strategy and rhetoric. They are economic, immediate, and global in scope. The war has triggered a chain reaction across energy markets, supply chains, and financial systems, transforming a regional conflict into a worldwide economic shock.

Before the war, many American consumers, including drivers in Michigan, were paying around \$2.40 per gallon for gasoline. Today, the same drivers are paying nearly \$4.60 per gallon. That is an increase of \$2.20 per gallon, or almost 92 percent—a near doubling of the fuel burden on ordinary families. This is not a minor fluctuation or a routine market adjustment. For a 15-gallon tank, the cost has jumped from about \$36 to \$69, meaning one fill-up now costs roughly \$33 more than before. For millions of families, this is not an abstract economic indicator—it is a daily reality. Every gallon of fuel purchased carries the weight of geopolitical decisions. Transportation costs rise, and with them the price of food, healthcare, clothing, and essential services. Inflation spreads across the economy, eroding purchasing

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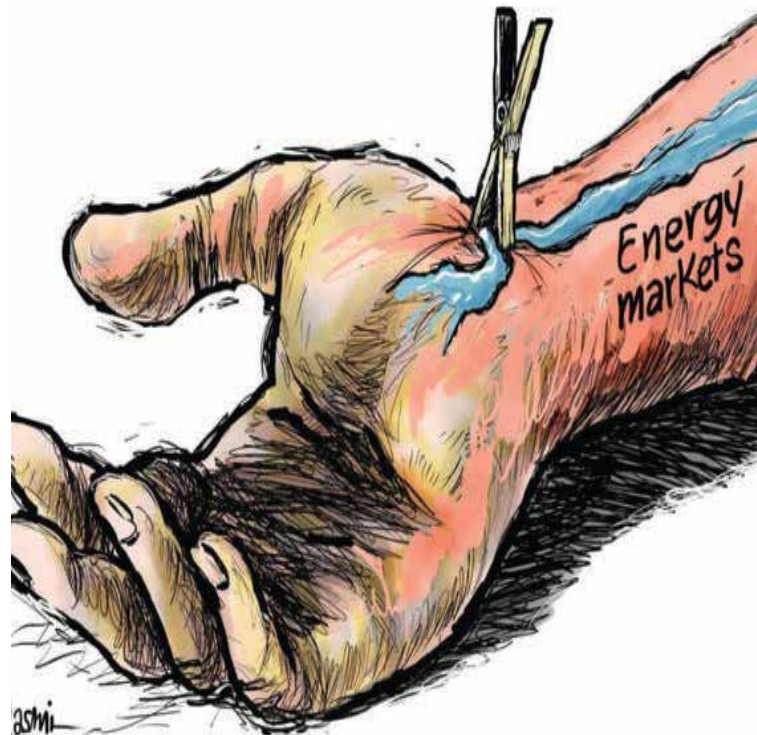
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power and increasing the cost of living. Analysts estimate that households are paying thousands of dollars more annually, not just in fuel but through the cascading effects of inflation that ripple through every sector. But the cost is not confined to the United States; it is global, systemic, and staggering in scale. Current estimates suggest that the 2026 U.S.—The Iran war has already inflicted a direct loss of around \$3.5 trillion, wiping out over 3 percent of global economic output. Financial markets have reacted even more sharply, with nearly \$12 trillion in global market capitalization erased, reflecting deep uncertainty and loss of investor confidence. At the same time, the International Monetary Fund has downgraded global growth by 0.3 to 1.4 percentage points, warning that the world is approaching the threshold of a synchronized recession, with worst-case scenarios pushing growth down to nearly 2 percent. The regional toll is equally severe: Arab economies alone have lost between \$120 billion and \$194 billion within a single month, while Asian economies face losses ranging from \$97 billion to \$300 billion as they struggle to absorb energy shocks. The aviation industry alone has suffered unprecedented losses, with over \$53 billion wiped out in airline market value within weeks, while jet fuel prices have more than doubled from roughly \$830 to over \$1,800 per tonne, adding nearly \$11 billion in additional global operating costs. This has forced massive operational cutbacks, including over 60,000 flight cancellations, and even led to the collapse of major carriers, marking the industry's worst crisis since the pandemic. At the same time, the global tourism sector—valued at over \$11.7 trillion—is bleeding heavily, with losses of up to \$600 million per day in visitor spending and projected annual declines of \$34 to \$56 billion in the Middle East alone. These disruptions extend far beyond travel, affecting logistics, trade, and essential supply chains worldwide. What began as a regional conflict has thus evolved into a systemic global economic shock, shaking industries, markets, and livelihoods far removed from the battlefield. The United States and its allies, particularly Israel, initiated a conflict whose consequences have been borne not only by the adversary but by the entire world. Ideally, the total cost of such a war should be calculated by an independent international body—quantifying the damage to global GDP, supply chains, and living standards. Those responsible for initiating the conflict should, in principle, be held accountable for the economic consequences imposed on others. Such accountability may never be enforced in practical terms, particularly when it involves global powers, but its acknowledgment remains essential for the credibility of international norms. The United States, as the world's dominant economic and military power, is unlikely to compensate for these losses. The scale of the damage itself is so vast that even the largest economy could not fully absorb it. Yet acknowledging responsibility is not merely about financial repayment—it is about recognizing the consequences of decisions that affect billions of lives. The transition from "Epic Fury" to "Project Freedom" marks the transformation of a conflict from an ambitious attempt at strategic dominance into a complex struggle to manage its own unintended consequences. Yet this war has revealed something even more profound. It has demonstrated that power in the 21st century is no longer defined solely by the scale of conventional military strength.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)  
Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan in France  
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia  
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## Symbolism, Soft Power and the Atlantic Bond

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The relationship between Britain and the United States has long been described as "special", though the phrase can sometimes conceal more than it explains. States act according to interests, not sentiment. Yet history, language, legal traditions, intelligence cooperation and military partnership have given London and Washington a degree of familiarity unmatched by most alliances. From the beaches of Normandy to the corridors of Nato, the two countries have repeatedly found themselves on the same side of major global contests. King Charles sought to reaffirm this continuity

THE address of King Charles III to a joint meeting of the United States Congress this week was more than a ceremonial speech. It was a carefully staged moment of diplomacy, layered with history, symbolism and contemporary political meaning. In a world unsettled by wars, strategic competition and democratic anxieties, the appearance of the British monarch before American lawmakers carried significance well beyond the grandeur of protocol. Only a handful of foreign leaders and dignitaries are invited to speak before Congress. For a British sovereign, the occasion is rarer still. Queen Elizabeth II addressed Congress in 1991 during the closing chapter of the Cold War. Her son's appearance in 2026 comes at a time when the international order appears far less certain. If the queen's speech belonged to an era of confidence, King Charles's speech belongs to an age of fragmentation.

The relationship between Britain and the United States has long been described as "special", though the phrase can sometimes conceal more than it explains. States act according to interests, not sentiment. Yet history, language, legal traditions, intelligence cooperation and military partnership have given London and Washington a degree of familiarity unmatched by most alliances. From the beaches of Normandy to the corridors of Nato, the two countries have repeatedly found themselves on the same side of major global contests. King Charles sought to reaffirm this continuity. His remarks reportedly celebrated shared democratic values, constitutional traditions and enduring cooperation. Such themes are predictable in speeches of this kind, but predictability should not be mistaken for irrelevance. In diplomacy, repetition often serves a purpose. Allies restate commitments precisely because they know the world is changing. The speech also came at an interesting moment in domestic politics on both sides of the Atlantic. The United States remains deeply polarised, with election cycles increasingly bitter and institutional trust under strain. Britain, meanwhile, continues to define its post-Brexit place in the world while managing economic pres-

ures and political fatigue. In such conditions, gestures of stability become valuable currency. Monarchy, for all debates surrounding it, offers Britain a form of continuity that elected governments often cannot.

This is where the King's visit matters most. Unlike prime ministers, monarchs do not negotiate trade deals or command parliamentary majorities. Their influence lies in symbolism, access and tone. They represent the long durée of the state rather than the temporary authority of government. In practical terms, that can be useful. A sovereign can open doors, smooth atmospherics and remind partners that relations between states outlast changes in administrations. King Charles has also inherited a monarchy facing modern scrutiny. Questions about relevance, cost and colonial legacy remain active in Britain and across the Commonwealth. Every major foreign visit is therefore an exercise in balancing tradition with adaptation. The Congress address served as an example of how the Crown seeks contemporary purpose: less imperial pageantry, more advocacy for shared causes such as climate, heritage and intergenerational responsibility. On climate issues in particular, the King brings a distinctive profile. Long before environmentalism entered the political mainstream, he was speaking about conservation, sustainable farming and ecological balance. That background gives him credibility on subjects that transcend party divides, even if policy itself remains contested. In Washington, where climate legislation can become hostage to partisan conflict, a royal voice on stewardship carries moral rather than legislative weight. There is also a strategic backdrop impossible to ignore. The war in Ukraine continues to shape European security thinking. Tensions with Russia endure. Competition with China structures much of Western foreign policy. Meanwhile, questions persist about burden-sharing within Nato and America's willingness to underwrite alliances indefinitely. In such circumstances, Britain is eager to present itself as Washington's most dependable partner in Europe. The King's speech cannot resolve these di-

lemmas, but it can reinforce a narrative useful to both capitals: that the Atlantic alliance remains resilient. Britain gains relevance by emphasising its diplomatic reach and defence commitment. America gains reassurance that it still has close allies willing to share risks and responsibilities. Yet symbolism has limits. Fine words in Congress cannot substitute for coherent policy. Britain's defence capabilities, economic performance and diplomatic leverage matter more than ceremonial eloquence. Likewise, American reliability will be judged less by applause in the chamber than by decisions on aid, alliances and global engagement. If speeches create atmosphere, policy determines outcomes. Still, atmosphere should not be dismissed. International politics is not conducted by spreadsheets alone. Perception, sentiment and historical memory shape choices in subtle ways. The sight of a British monarch addressing the legislature of a republic born in revolt against the Crown contains its own irony, but also a lesson. Former adversaries can become enduring partners when institutions mature and interests align. For Pakistan and other middle powers, such moments are worth observing. They show how nations use culture, history and symbolism alongside military and economic tools. Hard power remains decisive, but soft power can amplify influence when used intelligently. Britain understands that even after imperial decline, prestige and networks still matter. America, despite its revolutionary origins, recognises the utility of ceremony when it serves strategic ends.

In the final analysis, King Charles's address was not about changing policy overnight. It was about reassuring audiences that certain relationships still possess depth in a volatile age. Whether that reassurance proves durable will depend on events far beyond the chamber. But in uncertain times, states often turn to symbols to steady themselves. That, perhaps, was the real purpose of the King's words: to remind two restless democracies that alliances are built not only on immediate interests, but also on memory, habit and the patient work of renewal.

## When Narrative Beat Firepower

M Rashid Tabassum

This is how narrative warfare works today. You do not always need a military breakthrough; sometimes you only need a believable lie delivered at high speed. But this time, the digital response created an unexpected shift. Pakistani users did not remain silent consumers of information.

A large number of journalists, researchers, digital activists, and ordinary social media users began checking claims in real time. Videos were reverse searched. Timestamps were matched. Locations were verified.

WAR no longer begins with tanks crossing borders or fighter jets entering the sky. In today's world, the first strike often appears on television screens, social media feeds, and mobile notifications. Before missiles are fired, narratives are set in motion. Before troops advance, public perception is carefully shaped. This is the new reality of modern warfare: weapons matter, but narrative often matters more. The Pakistan-India military confrontation in May 2025, particularly during Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos, made this reality impossible to ignore. The conflict was not fought only through air strikes, defense systems, and military movement. It was fought just as aggressively through headlines, hashtags, breaking news alerts, viral videos, and psychological messaging.

During Operation Bunyan Marsoos, India reportedly sustained notable military and economic losses. At least five Indian Air Force aircraft—including Rafale jets—were said to have been downed. In addition, several military installations, including brigade headquarters, border outposts, missile systems and logistics hubs, were reportedly damaged, impacting operational capacity and denting troops morale. The financial impact was also immediate. Investor confidence weakened, markets showed sharp volatility, and diplomatic circles quickly began pressing for de-escalation. But these physical losses were only one side of the picture. The bigger battle was unfolding elsewhere—in the information space. Modern warfare is no longer decided by firepower alone. It now depends equally on communication, speed, perception, and the ability to control credibility. A missile can hit a target, but a narrative can hit millions of minds within min-

utes. In many cases, public opinion now moves faster than military facts.

This was clearly visible during the crisis. Several Indian tv channels and digital platforms began pushing dramatic claims that often sounded more like war fiction than verified reporting. On the night of May 9, stories of a "military coup in Pakistan" and a "collapse of government control in Islamabad" spread rapidly across tv tickers and online posts. Other claims suggested that Pakistan's defense chain had broken down and Indian forces had made deep advances. For several hours, these reports dominated screens and social media conversations despite the absence of solid evidence. Rumor was presented as breaking news, and speculation was sold as fact. In the race for attention, verification disappeared. The confusion did not stop at television studios. Social media turned into a battlefield of its own. Old videos from unrelated conflicts, gaming footage, edited explosions, fake government notifications, and manufactured international headlines began circulating as real-time war updates. Many users shared them without checking. The purpose was simple: create panic, confusion, and a sense of psychological superiority. This is how narrative warfare works today. You do not always need a military breakthrough; sometimes you only need a believable lie delivered at high speed. But this time, the digital response created an unexpected shift. Pakistani users did not remain silent consumers of information. A large number of journalists, researchers, digital activists, and ordinary social media users began checking claims in real time. Videos were reverse searched. Timestamps were matched. Locations were verified. Fake graphics were exposed. Deleted posts and tweets were screenshotted and recirculated. When reports of a coup in Islamabad began circulating, videos show-

ing routine government activity were quickly shared online. When war footage was presented as fresh, users located the original clips from older conflicts and posted side-by-side comparisons. One false claim after another began collapsing under public scrutiny.

In many cases, the most effective counter did not come from official briefings but from public ridicule. Exaggerated claims by some Indian anchors were turned into memes within hours. Predictions of rapid military advances became material for satire. This changed the emotional temperature of the information war. Fear was replaced by ridicule. Panic was replaced by public mockery. And once a propaganda claim becomes a joke, it loses much of its power. Hashtags in Urdu and English helped this counter-message travel beyond Pakistan. Corrected facts, exposed visuals, and clipped broadcasts moved quickly across international audiences. The result was significant: misinformation no longer enjoyed a free run.

That is the central lesson from Bunyan-um-Marsoos. In earlier wars, battlefield updates shaped public perception. In modern wars, public perception often starts shaping the battlefield itself. A false report can create panic. A viral video can shape diplomatic pressure. A trending hashtag can pressure governments. In this environment, information has become almost as influential as ammunition. The world is entering an era where military strength alone does not guarantee advantage. States now need credible communication, fast fact-checking, and digital preparedness. Media institutions need responsibility. Citizens need caution. In modern conflict, the side that controls the narrative often shapes the outcome. And sometimes, one unverified headline can travel farther than a missile.

— Note: The writer is a freelance journalist based in Lahore, can be reached at rashid.vapk@gmail.com

## Briefs

US, Iran  
'close' to  
ending war

FROM PAGE 01  
The report came hours after US President Donald Trump paused a three-day-old naval mission to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. The Axios report said the US expected Iranian responses on several key points in the next 48 hours. Among other provisions, Axios said, the deal would involve Iran committing to a moratorium on nuclear enrichment, the US agreeing to lift its sanctions and release billions of dollars in frozen Iranian funds, and both sides lifting restrictions around transit through the Strait of Hormuz. The one-page, 14-point memorandum of understanding was being negotiated between US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner and several Iranian officials, both directly and through mediators, Axios said. In its current form, the memorandum would declare an end to the war in the region and the start of a 30-day period of negotiations on a detailed agreement to open the strait, limit Iran's nuclear programme and lift US sanctions, Axios added. Iran's restrictions on shipping through the strait and the US naval blockade of Iran would be gradually lifted during that 30-day period, Axios said, citing one US official who added that if the negotiations collapsed, US forces would be able to restore the blockade or resume military action.

Trump halts  
Hormuz  
escort...

FROM PAGE 01  
The White House did not immediately reply to a request for comment on what progress had been made, or how long the pause would last. Rubio and other senior administration officials said earlier on Tuesday that Iran could not be allowed to control traffic through the strait. Iran has effectively sealed off the strait by threatening to deploy mines, drones, missiles and fast-attack craft. The United States has countered by blockading Iranian ports and mounting escorted transits for commercial vessels. The US military said on Monday it had destroyed several Iranian small boats, as well as cruise missiles and drones. Rubio told reporters at the White House that the United States had achieved its objectives in its military campaign, which was launched on February 28 alongside Israel. "Operation Epic Fury is concluded," Rubio said. "We're not cheering for an additional situation to occur."

Supreme  
Court, FCC  
have...

FROM PAGE 01  
The Supreme Court maintained that the constitutional framework after the amendment establishes two distinct apex courts exercising independent jurisdictions rather than one court functioning in appellate supervision over the other. The judgment noted that the Federal Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court are "coordinate courts" operating in separate constitutional domains. The SC clarified that Article 189 of the Constitution, which deals with binding precedents, does not subordinate one apex court to the other. The Court held that decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court would remain binding only to the extent of legal principles and questions of law, but neither court could act as an appellate forum over the other's judgments. The judgment further warned that continuing to hear clubbed writ and non-writ proceedings together after the constitutional amendment could create jurisdictional conflicts and contradictory decisions. To avoid such complications, the Court directed that all such combined matters pending before the Supreme Court must now be "de-clubbed" and routed to their constitutionally designated forums.

Iran demands Fifa  
guarantee IRGC will not  
be insulted at World Cup

"We are going to World Cup, and our host is FIFA — not Trump or America," says Iranian FA chief

DNA

TEHRAN: Iranian FA (FFIRI) chief Mehdi Taj said that FIFA must guarantee that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is not insulted by the United States if the national team is to travel to the country to play at the World Cup in June. An FFIRI delegation, including Taj, turned back from the Canadian border last week because of what he said was disrespectful treatment at the hands of immigration officials as they tried to attend the Fifa Congress in Vancouver. Taj said the decision to return home had been their own choice but Canada's immigration minister later confirmed to parliament that the FFIRI president's visa had been cancelled while he was in the air because of his links to the IRGC.

Canada listed the IRGC, an elite military force in Iran, as a "terrorist entity" in 2024, five years after the US did the same. Fifa Secretary-General Mattias Grafstrom sent a letter expressing regret at the "inconvenience and disappointment" the Iranians had experienced in Canada and inviting FFIRI to Zurich on May 20 for a meeting about their World Cup preparations. Taj told state broadcaster IRIB on Tuesday that he would be seeking assurances from the governing body about the treatment of the Iranian delegation in the US. "We need a guarantee there, for our trip, that they have no right to insult the symbols of our system — especially the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps," he said on the sidelines of a pro-government night rally in Tehran. "This is something they must pay serious attention to. If there is such a guarantee and

the responsibility is clearly assumed, then an incident like what happened in Canada will not happen again." The US, Canada and Mexico are co-hosting the June 11 to July 19 World Cup with Iran scheduled to play two group games in Los Angeles and one in Seattle. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said last week Washington had no objections to Iranian players participating in the tournament but no one with ties to the IRGC would be admitted to the country. Taj, who served as a high-ranking official with the IRGC in Isfahan Province before moving into soccer administration, said anything short of cast-iron guarantees could result in the Iranian delegation turning back at the US border. "We are going to the World Cup, for which we qualified, and our host is FIFA — not Mr Trump or America," he added.

"If they accept hosting us, then they must also accept that they must not insult our military institutions in any way. "Because if they do, then naturally it could create the same kind of situation that happened in Canada, where there was a possibility we might have to return. "So there must be this kind of guarantee so that we can go with peace of mind." Iran's participation in the World Cup has been in question since the US and Israel launched air strikes on the Islamic Republic in late February. With Iranian top-flight football suspended, the home-based players have been in a training camp in Tehran preparing for the tournament. Taj said the FFIRI were hoping to set up at least one friendly with a "very good team" in neighbouring Turkey, where Iran played matches against Nigeria and Costa Rica in late March.

Bulgaria  
celebrates Day  
of Valour

BAKU: With a blessing of the battle flags and sacred banners, the Day of Valour and the Bulgarian Armed Forces Day - May 6 - will be marked in the capital, the Bulgarian News Agency (BTA) reported citing the Ministry of Defence. The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. in front of the Monument to the Unknown Soldier in Sofia with a helicopter flyover carrying the national flag of the Republic of Bulgaria. The blessing will be officiated by Bulgarian Patriarch Daniil. The President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria Iliana Iotova will receive the guard of honour and pay tribute at the Monument to

the Unknown Soldier. She will deliver an address, the head of State's press centre said. The ceremonial ritual will be attended by caretaker Minister of Defence Atanas Zaprjanov, Chief of Defence Admiral Emil Efimov, and senior officers of the Bulgarian Army. Invited to attend are National Assembly Chair Mihaela Dotsova, caretaker Prime Minister Andrey Gurov, National Assembly deputy chairs, the leaders of the parliamentary represented political forces, the floor leaders and deputy floor leaders of the parliamentary groups, representatives of the caretaker Cabinet, State institutions, local authorities, religious communities in Bulgaria, the diplomatic and military diplomatic corps and military patriotic unions. During the performance of the national anthem at the blessing of the battle flags, 20 artillery salutes will be fired. As a sign of gratitude to the Bulgarian soldiers who died for the freedom of Bulgaria, wreaths and flowers will be laid at the Monument to the Unknown Soldier. — APP

Amb Qureshi pays tribute  
to Pakistan leadership

BRUSSELS: The Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels held a dignified commemorative ceremony to mark the first anniversary of Marka-e-Haq — Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos, reaffirming the nation's unwavering commitment to its security and sovereignty. The event was attended by a large number of the Pakistani diaspora from across Belgium and Luxembourg, including prominent business leaders, students, and media representatives. Commenced with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, the ceremony was followed by the screening of a special documentary highlighting the significance of

Marka-e-Haq. In his remarks, Ambassador of Pakistan to the European Union, Belgium, and Luxembourg Rahim Hayat Qureshi paid rich tribute to the visionary leadership of Pakistan, the valor of Pakistani Armed Forces, the resilience of the Pakistani people, and the vital role played by media organizations. Ambassador Qureshi paid profound homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in defense of the homeland. He emphasized that the strength of the nation was rooted in unity and collective resolve—values that remain essential to Pakistan's ongoing progress and stability. — APP

Pakistan street child  
football team reaches  
Mexico for  
global tournament

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's street child football team has arrived in Mexico to take part in the Street Child Football World Cup 2026, carrying the aspirations of vulnerable children from across the country. The competition that commenced on May 5 will conclude on May 15. According to details, Pakistan team received a warm welcome at the airport in Mexico by members of the overseas Pakistani community. The team's participation has been facilitated with the support of Muslim Hands, an organization working to uplift disadvantaged children through education, sports and social development initiatives. The event provides an international platform for street-connected children to showcase their football talent while raising their voices on critical global issues. Officials accompanying the squad expressed confidence in the team's preparation and performance. After undergoing months of intensive training, personal development sessions and team-building exercises, the players are determined to deliver a strong showing in the tournament. "This is not just a competition but an opportunity to challenge perceptions and inspire hope," a team official said, adding that the players are committed to making the country proud on the global stage. — APP

Knights chess academy presents  
5th rapid chess tournament

ISLAMABAD: Knights Chess Academy successfully organized its 5th Rapid Chess Tournament on 2nd May 2026 at Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex, Rawalpindi. More than 30 players participated in this exciting tournament. The CEO of KCA and Chief Guest, Mr. Babar Sultan, awarded cash prizes to the top three players. Special prizes were also given to the Top U-16 Player and Top Female Player.

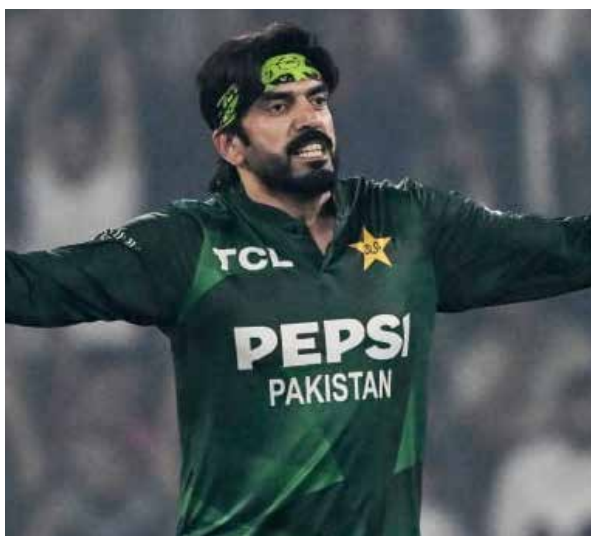
Winners:  
1st Position: Ali Hussain  
2nd Position: Anis Ur Rehman Zaidi  
3rd Position: Liaqat Ali  
Top U-16 Player: Meeqail Shoaib  
Top Female Player: Hareema Babar  
Online certificates were awarded to the position holders, while participation certificates were also provided to other players upon request. During the lunch break, delicious biryani and black tea were served. The young players enjoyed the event

Usman Tariq signed by Warwickshire  
for Vitality Blast 2026

"Usman is exactly the type of high-impact player we want to bring into Warwickshire," says Bears' performance director

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan's mystery spinner Usman Tariq has been roped in by Warwickshire Bears for the Vitality T20 Blast, set to commence on May 22, the club announced on Tuesday. In a statement, the club said that the 30-year-old spinner had offers to play franchise cricket in various leagues across the globe, but it won the competition to acquire his services. As a result, Tariq will spend most of England's summer season at the Edgbaston Stadium as his maiden Vitality Blast stint will be followed by The Hundred campaign with the Birmingham Phoenix, who signed him for £140,000 at the players' draft in March. Reacting to his allegiance with the Bears, Tariq termed it a great feeling before expressing his eagerness to bring energy to the squad, which he was impatiently looking forward to joining. "I am very excited to bring more fun and energy to the Bears. I can't wait to get involved with the squad, and it's a great feeling to be part of this team. I hope to see as many people as possible at Edgbaston this summer," Tariq was quoted



as saying by the Bears. Bears' Performance Director James Thomas labelled Tariq "exactly the type of high-impact player" they were looking to bring in and thus expressed profound delight over securing his services for the upcoming tournament. "Usman is exactly the type of high-impact player we want to bring into Warwickshire, so we're delighted to get this deal completed," Thomas said in a statement. "His skill set and tactical awareness make him a genuine threat in modern white-ball cricket, but it's his hunger to compete and continually improve that really stands out. "What makes this signing particularly exciting is the alignment between Warwickshire and Birmingham Phoenix. Bringing Usman into the Bears for the Vitality Blast, before transitioning into The Hundred with the Phoenix, reflects the strength of our integrated model across club and franchise. "It allows us to create continuity for the player, maximize performance impact across both competitions, and build stronger connections with our supporters in Birmingham and Warwickshire. Ultimately, this is about strengthening the team, the franchise, and our presence in the area, and we believe Usman can play a key role in that this summer.

Pakistan  
desires  
permanent end...

FROM PAGE 01  
ceasefire and talks between the two sides. The Prime Minister paid tribute to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for his role in peace talks. He said that China, Turkey and other fraternal countries also contributed in this process. Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan pursued a balanced and principled stance in the current regional context. He emphasized that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have also opened a new chapter in their bilateral relations, emphasizing that protection, defense and security of Harmein Sharifain is more dear to us than our lives. He said the defense agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is a reaffirmation of this firm resolve. Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan stands firm on its principled position on Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir. He said Pakistan will continue to stand by the Palestinian and Kashmiri people until they get the right to self-determination.

PM  
welcomes  
Trump's  
decision

FROM PAGE 01  
Project Freedom in the Strait of Hormuz," he wrote. PM Shehbaz noted that President Trump's response to requests from Pakistan and other countries, particularly the Saudi Arabia and its Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, would contribute positively to regional peace, stability, and reconciliation during a sensitive period. The prime minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to supporting efforts aimed at restraint and the peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy. "We are very hopeful that the current momentum will lead to a lasting agreement that secures durable peace and stability for the region and beyond," he added.

EU urged  
to act on  
West Bank

FROM PAGE 01  
illegal annexation of Palestinian land in the West Bank," said the letter signed by more than 440 figures, including former EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and former Belgian prime minister Guy Verhofstadt. The signatories called for targeted sanctions, such as visa bans and business restrictions, on "all those engaged in illegal settlement activity," calling for measures against those promoting or implementing the E1 scheme. The Israeli government plans to publish an initial tender on June 1 for the construction of housing for up to 15,000 "illegal settlers," the letter said, urging the EU and its member states to "act now." The plan has been condemned by international leaders, with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres's spokesman saying it would pose an "existential threat" to a contiguous Palestinian state.

Beijing  
to play  
greater role

FROM PAGE 01  
Beijing has quietly engaged in efforts to resolve the week-long crisis and its diplomacy is credited with playing an important role in the fragile ceasefire agreed between Washington and Tehran. China "will work harder to ease tensions and end the fighting, continue to support the launch of peace talks, and play a greater role in restoring peace and tranquility to the Middle East", Wang told Iran's Abbas Araghchi in Beijing. "China considers that a complete cessation of fighting must be achieved without delay, that it is even more unacceptable to restart hostilities, and that continuing to negotiate remains essential," Wang said, according to a statement from his ministry after the talks. Manufacturing giant China has been comparatively sheltered from fuel shortages thanks to oil reserves and renewable energy, but costs of oil-derived materials like plastic and fabric have risen significantly.

## Briefs

## Rupee gains 03 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.72 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 278.75. 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 279.75, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee increased by Rs 1.25 and closed at Rs 327.16 from the previous day's close of Rs 325.91, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen gained 01 paise to close at Rs 1.78, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 1.59 and closed at Rs 379.04 compared to the previous day's Rs 377.45. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham stood stagnant to close at Rs 75.89, while the Saudi Riyal declined by 02 paise and closed at 74.27, respectively. —APP

## Govt strengthens coordination with provinces on CPF: Ahad

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Cheema, said here on Wednesday that the federal government was working in close coordination with all provincial governments to ensure the effective achievement of the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) objectives. The minister was talking to Country Director of the World Bank, Bolomaa Amgababaz, who called on him here, according to press release issued by Ministry of Economic Affairs. According to the press release, the discussion focused on the key outcomes of CPF, a 10-year Framework for Pakistan (FY2026–FY2035), with a support of US\$20 billion for development projects and reform programs. They also discussed programs aimed at reducing child stunting through the provision of clean water, improved sanitation systems, better healthcare, and proper nutrition.

Climate resilience also featured prominently, with a focus on mitigating the impacts of floods and other climate-related risks, while ensuring food and nutrition security within the context of the water-agriculture nexus. The transition toward cleaner and more sustainable energy systems, along with improved air quality, was also focused as priority area. Cheema noted that all these areas fall under both federal and provincial jurisdiction and stated that the federal government and all provincial governments are on board and remain committed to implementing the CPF and achieving its intended outcomes. Both sides also emphasized the importance of fostering productive and inclusive private sector investment through IFC in order to boost exports, improve external balances, and drive higher, more sustainable economic growth. He appreciated the continued support of the World Bank Group and reiterated the government's resolve to ensure policy continuity and the effective implementation of reforms.—APP

## Gold prices surge by Rs 11,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold increased sharply in the local market on Wednesday, with 24 karat gold per tola rising by Rs 11,100 to settle at Rs 488,962 compared to Rs 477,862 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 jumped by Rs 9,517 to Rs 419,206 from Rs 409,689, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold increased by Rs 8,725 to Rs 384,286 against Rs 375,561. In the international market, the price of gold went up by \$111 to \$4,666 per ounce from \$4,555.—APP

## ICCI, MOE to develop market-driven curriculum

Wajiha stresses industry-academia linkage for youth empowerment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training and the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry have agreed to jointly evolve a comprehensive mechanism for developing a market-driven curriculum aimed at transforming Pakistan's youth into job creators rather than merely job seekers. This understanding was reached during the visit of Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training Ms. Wajiha Qamar to ICCI on Wednesday, where she was warmly received by the Chamber's leadership and members. Both sides agreed to constitute a Joint Working Group along with the appointment of focal persons to ensure regular coordination between academia and industry for achieving tangible outcomes. Addressing the gathering, Ms. Wajiha Qamar stressed the urgent need for stronger industry-academia linkages and urged the business community to come forward with practical and implementable proposals to align education with market requirements. She observed that rapid transformations taking place across the global economic landscape demand collaborative policymaking to equip Pakistani youth with modern skills capable of generating employment opportunities and earning valuable foreign exchange for the country. The Minister emphasized that professional training, internationally recognized certifications, and skill development have become the need of the hour. She stated that both public and private sectors must work collectively for developing certification mechanisms and modern training frameworks capable of

preparing youth for emerging global markets. Speaking on the occasion, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood reaffirmed the Chamber's commitment to strengthening collaboration between academia and industry for designing a market-oriented curriculum and conducting awareness sessions in partnership with relevant stakeholders. He emphasized the importance of focused engagement, regular interaction, and policy continuity for economic diversification and sustainable growth. He also highlighted the need for confidence-building measures and consistent economic policies to attract both local and foreign investment. Chairman ICCI Founder Group Tariq Sadiq



workforce is essential to meet the growing demands of modern industries and international markets. He stressed that educational institutions must focus on practical learning, innovation, and entrepreneurship instead of relying solely on conventional academic models. Former ICCI President Mian Akram Farid observed that Pakistan's economic progress largely depends upon preparing a technically competent workforce capable of competing at international standards. He emphasized that vocational training institutes should be modernized in accordance with evolving industrial requirements and global technological

Masud underlined the importance of imparting technical training in fields such as laptop repairing and emerging technologies to create self-employment opportunities for youth. He added that empowering youth with practical skills would help strengthen Pakistan's digital economy and reduce dependence on traditional employment sectors. ICCI Vice President Muhammad Irfan Chaudhry, senior member Dr. Mohammad Usman and Azam Mohammad, Secretary General Ghulam Murtaza, Executive Committee Member Ishaq Sial and others also shared their insights during the interactive session.

ISLAMABAD: This year's Labor Day holiday has seen China's consumption market demonstrate remarkable vitality, with total cross-regional trips nationwide projected to reach 1.52 billion, representing a 4 percent increase compared with the same period last year. Running from May 1 to May 6 at the Lhasa Hotel, the six-day exhibition has attracted more than 90 enterprises from over 20 countries, showcasing an array of international products including Indonesian coffee, Iranian saffron, Afghan carpets, Nepalese Thangka paintings, Bhutanese incense and Pakistani handicrafts, according to a report carried by China Economic Net on Wednesday. Among the participants is Aidi, a Pakistani exhibitor attending his seventh trade exhibition in Xizang. This year, he brought onyx handicrafts shipped by sea from Pakistan, featuring a range of colors and varieties, including decorative vases in multiple sizes. "The foot traffic here is excellent," Aidi said, speaking highly of the exhibition's economic impact and expressing strong confidence in the platform the event provides for trade and cultural exchange. His presence, along with other international vendors, underscores the growing appeal of Xizang as a destination for global commerce.—APP

## Global goods including Pakistani handing converge on Lhasa

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## Tripartite MoU signed to boost China-Pak medical cooperation

ISLAMABAD: A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed here among China Shandong Tongshan Group, Riphah International University (RIU) from Pakistan, and the China Pakistan Medical Association (CPMA), marking a step forward in cross-border medical education, research and healthcare collaboration. The MoU was signed by Li Xiao, Chairman of China Shandong Tongshan Group; Hassan Muhammad Khan, Chancellor of RIU; and Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz, President of CPMA, according to a report carried by China Economic Net (CEN) on Wednesday. The three signatories recognized the shared importance of mutual cooperation in advancing medical education, research, healthcare services and international collaboration.

## Pak-China Friendship hospital starts nursing training sessions

ISLAMABAD: In connection with International Nurses and Midwifery Week, Pak-China Friendship Hospital's Nursing Department has initiated a series of training sessions. The first session in this series was conducted by Consultant Dr. Mah Rukh Aslam from the Gynecology Department, focusing on the topic "Obstetric Emergencies," according to Gwadar Pro. Dr. Mah Rukh Aslam stated that nurses and midwives are the backbone of any hospital, providing the first reassurance and the final care to patients. She elaborated on emergency conditions and complications that can arise in pregnant women, emphasizing that timely and appropriate actions play a crucial role in saving the lives of both mother and child. The session was actively attended by nursing staff, midwives, and doctors, who stressed that nurses and midwives are the first responders; therefore, their prompt diagnosis and effective intervention can significantly reduce complications. According to Nursing Department Manager Saima Ali Shah, this training series will continue throughout the week and will cover other important topics as well. At the end of the session, participants described it as highly beneficial and essential for practical life.—APP

## Triple hit of aid cuts, drought, conflict leaves Somalis desperate

KISMAYO: Maryam saw her goats starve, her crops fail and buried two of her children before she finally gave up hope and sought help from international aid agencies in southern Somalia. She left her village with her remaining six children, making the long journey on the Jubba River to one of a clutch of makeshift settlements on the outskirts of Kismayo, the capital of Somalia's Jubaland state. But there was no food there either. Three straight seasons of failed rains have doubled Somalia's malnutrition rate and Maryam is among more than 300,000 Somalis forced to leave their homes since January alone. Several international organizations have stopped operations in the Kismayo camp — in large part due to aid cuts ordered by US President Donald Trump last year. "We are hungry. We need care and help," said Maryam, 46, whose last name is being withheld by AFP for security reasons. She spoke in front of her shelter — scraps of tarpaulin stretched over branches. Haunted by the memory of her dead children's swollen bellies, she will not return to her village, which is under the control of the Islamist insurgent group Al-Shabab. They have started seizing the limited food supplies available. But the camp is hardly better. In March alone, five children died of malnutrition, its manager says. Animal carcasses — since its state collapsed in the early 1990s, Somalia has endured near-constant civil war, Islamist insurgencies, floods and droughts. Famine has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. The war-torn country ranks among the world's most vulnerable to climate change, which scientists say is leading to more frequent and more intense incidences of extreme weather like droughts and floods. Africa, which contributes the least to global warming, bears the brunt. The recent cuts in foreign aid have not helped. They have had "a huge impact on our work," said Mohamud Mohamed Hassan, Somalia director for NGO Save the Children. More than 200 health centers and 400 schools have closed since last year. Near the Kismayo camp, the carcasses of cattle, donkeys and goats litter the roadside. Farmers, whose herds and crops have been decimated, describe one of the worst droughts ever recorded in a country where a third already lacked regular meals. Even if the forthcoming rainy season is normal, it will take months for affected populations to recover. "We cannot afford to actually address all the needs of these people," said Ali Adan Ali, a Jubaland official managing the displaced. "Toxic cocktail" — At a mobile health clinic supported by Save the Children — the only one still operating for multiple camps in the area around Kismayo — a woman named Khadija tried to feed a high-calorie solution to her severely malnourished one-year-old daughter. The child writhed in her arms. She came to the camp after last year's drought killed off her livestock but here, too, "we have nothing to eat," the 45-year-old said. A hospital in Kismayo is the only facility in the region capable of treating the most severe cases of malnutrition.—APP

## N Korea drops references to unification from constitution

SEOUL: North Korea has deleted all references to uniting with South Korea from its constitution, a document reviewed by AFP on Wednesday showed, underscoring Pyongyang's push for a more hostile policy toward Seoul. North and South Korea remain technically at war because their 1950-53 war ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty. Pyongyang's constitution had previously contained a clause stating that it aimed "to realize the unification of the motherland." That reference no longer appears in the latest version, presented on Wednesday by a professor during a news conference at South Korea's Unification Ministry and subsequently seen by AFP. North Korean officials considered constitutional amendments at a major congress in March, where leader Kim Jong Un labelled Seoul as the "most hostile state." The deleted clause used to say that the nuclear-armed nation would struggle for "national reunification on the principles of independence, peaceful reunification, and great national unity." The revised constitution, which the document indicated was introduced in March, also

includes a new clause delineating North Korea's territory. Using South Korea's official name, it says that includes the area bordering China and Russia to the north, "and the Republic of Korea to the south." North Korea "absolutely does not allow any infringement on its territory," it added. South Korea's dovish President Lee Jae Myung has called for talks with the North without any preconditions, saying the countries are destined "to make the flowers of peace bloom." But the North has not responded to the Lee administration's overtures and has repeatedly called the South its "most hostile" adversary. That language has echoed a constitutional amendment in 2024, when Pyongyang defined the South as a "hostile state" for the first time. "By deleting references related to unification, North Korea appears to have codified the message that it will no longer seek to claim South Korean territory," said Yoon Moo-jin, a professor emeritus at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies. In turn, Pyongyang "expects the South not to infringe on the North's territory" he told AFP. During the administration of South Korea's hawkish ex-president Yoon

Suk Yeol, the North blew up roads and railways linking it with the South and erected what appeared to be barriers near the border. Seoul's military said in March this year that North Korea had resumed similar construction work in the area. Kim has vowed to boost his nuclear forces, and Pyongyang conducted four missile tests in April, the most in a single month for more than two years. In February, Kim said North Korea has "absolutely no business dealing with South Korea... and will permanently exclude South Korea from the category of compatriots." "As long as South Korea cannot escape the geopolitical conditions of having a border with us, the only way to live safely is to give up everything related to us and leave us alone," he added at the time. In contrast, South Korea's Lee vowed last month to act "proactively" to restore trust in the hope that Pyongyang would "respond in kind." Despite sporadic steps forward — for instance, a North Korean women's team will play a rare football match in the South this month — a grand rapprochement has remained beyond Lee's grasp.—DNA

## Lebanese singer-turned-militant acquitted of attempted murder

BEIRUT: A Lebanese court on Wednesday acquitted singer Fadel Shaker of the attempted murder of an official from a Hezbollah-allied group, a judicial official told AFP, after the star surrendered to police. The Lebanese-Palestinian entertainer turned himself over to authorities in October after more than a decade in hiding in a Palestinian refugee camp. Shaker was accused of taking part in the south Lebanon city of Sidon between the military and supporters of Salafist Sheikh Ahmad Al-Assir, which left 18 soldiers dead. While Shaker was a supporter of Assir, he denied involvement in the violence. He was also accused, alongside Assir and four others, of the attempted murder of Hilal Hammoud, a local official with the Hezbollah-allied Lebanese Resistance Brigades. They were all acquitted on Wednesday due to "insufficient evidence," the judicial official told AFP. Still in detention, Shaker is due to appear on May 26 before a military court in four other cases, including participating in the formation of an armed group. During his years on the run, courts convicted him in absentia and imposed sentences ranging from five to 15 years of hard labor. In the months leading up to his surrender in October, Shaker released new songs, recorded in the refugee camp, that topped charts in the Arab world. Assir, arrested in 2015 while attempting to flee Lebanon, was sentenced to death in 2017, then to 20 years of hard labor in 2021.—DNA

## President Zardari calls for unity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday urged religious scholars from across the Muslim world to play a proactive role in promoting unity, countering extremism, and projecting Islam's true message of peace. Addressing the concluding session of the Sixth International Paigham-e-Islam Conference 2026 here at the Presidency attended by former prime minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Senator Saleem Mandviwalla among ulema, diplomats, and delegates from various countries, including Palestine and Saudi Arabia, the president said the Muslim world was facing multiple challenges, including conflicts, instability, and divisions that required collective wisdom and unity to overcome. He observed that recent developments in West Asia had exposed deep fault lines affecting regional stability and economic conditions, while also distorting the global perception of Islam. He stressed that both external misrepresentation and internal sectarianism were contributing to these challenges. President Zardari emphasized that Islam is a religion of peace, balance, and humanity, noting that the sanctity of human life lies at the core of its teachings. He called upon religious scholars to provide practical and intellectual guidance rooted in Islamic principles to promote harmony, tolerance, and coexistence. Referring to Pakistan's experience, he said the country had made significant sacrific-



es in the fight against extremism and remained committed to eliminating violence in all forms. He also reiterated Pakistan's foreign policy stance, highlighting the need for peaceful resolution of disputes in South Asia, including Jammu and Kashmir. The president reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause,

calling for the establishment of an independent state of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. He also stressed the importance of peace in Afghanistan, saying Afghan soil should not be used for terrorist activities against any country. He appreciated the leadership of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Mohammed

bin Salman for their efforts in promoting unity within the Muslim Ummah and addressing regional challenges. Responding to general queries, the president emphasized the need to nullify misrepresentation of Islam and with the advent of modern technology understanding Islam and its glorious teachings have become easy to all. Pakistanis are globally recognized as the nation of religious scholars, doctors and engineers, he said adding that the entire nation alongwith ummah will rise again to glory. Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council, Maulana Tahir Ashrafi, said the conference, held at the Awan-e-Sadr, highlighted Islam as a religion of peace, love, tolerance, and interfaith harmony. He noted that the theme of this year's conference focused on global dialogue and emphasized the role of Pakistan's leadership in promoting unity and stability. He also referred to Pakistan's defence capabilities, stating that the country's strategic strength was built through the efforts of leaders such as Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, and praised the leadership for safeguarding national interests. Multi-e-Azam of Palestine, Muhammad Ahmed Hussein, thanked Pakistan for hosting the conference and reiterated that the Palestine issue remained central to the Muslim Ummah. He appreciated Pakistan's diplomatic efforts and expressed hope that cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would help strengthen unity among Muslim countries.

## Briefs

### SIFC proposes export of refurbished used cars

Proposal sent to govt for approval under newly drafted Auto Policy for 2026-31

#### NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has proposed introducing an import-refurbishment-export (IRE) model for used cars in Pakistan, on the lines of Dubai's Jebel Ali framework, to boost the country's export potential. Pakistan is eyeing multi-million-dollar exports with the help of this proposed mechanism at a time when the country's exports are struggling to achieve the desired target. The auto policy is currently in negotiation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and then it will be tabled before the federal cabinet. The auto policy has proposed the establishment of import, refurbishment, and export of used vehicles in order to give impetus to boost exports. It will replicate the international practice on the pattern of Dubai/Jebel Ali. It provides duty suspension incentives under the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS).

### Iran conflict may have motivated Trump dinner shooting suspect

#### NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The US Department of Homeland Security identified the US-Israeli war with Iran as a potential motive for the man accused of attempting to assassinate President Donald Trump and senior members of his administration at a White House reporters' gala last month, according to an intelligence report sent to state and local law enforcement nationwide and other federal agencies. The report, a preliminary assessment by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis dated April 27, assessed that the suspect Cole Allen had "multiple social and political grievances."

### President summons Senate, NA sessions

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday accorded approval to summon the sessions of the Senate and the National Assembly to meet on May 7 and May 11, 2026 respectively. The president gave the said approvals exercising his powers under Article 54(1) of the Constitution of Pakistan. The sessions of the both houses of the parliament will be held at the Parliament House. - APP

# Pak response to any future misadventure will be intense

Defence Minister said that Pakistan did not want any fighting in 2025, and it desired the same today. "But there should not be any doubt; Pakistan does not only respond, but it also determines the correct course of consequences

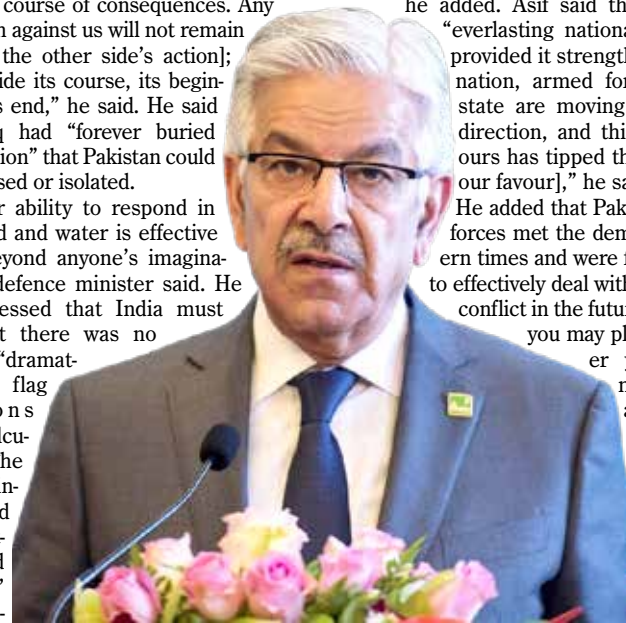
#### NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: In a televised message marking Marka-i-Haq, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Wednesday warned that Pakistan's reaction to any miscalculation in the future would be "more intense and decisive". Last year's military conflict with India, starting from the April 22 Pahalgalam attack to the end of Pakistan's Operation Bunalum Marsoos, with a ceasefire ending a military escalation between the two countries on May 10, has been called "Marka-i-Haq" (Battle of Truth) by the state. In his message, Asif said Marka-i-Haq was not just a "memorable episode for Pakistan, but a line that we have drawn forever". Anyone on the other side of this line should understand that Pakistan exercised tolerance and restraint during the 2025 episode, he said, warning that in case of an "incorrect assessment or miscalculation" in the future, the response would be "more intense and decisive". He added that Pakistan did not want any fighting in 2025, and it desired the same today.

"But there should not be any doubt; Pakistan does not only respond, but it also determines the correct course of consequences. Any adventurism against us will not remain limited [to the other side's action]; we will decide its course, its beginning and its end," he said. He said Marka-i-Haq had "forever buried the impression" that Pakistan could be pressurised or isolated. "Today, our ability to respond in the air, land and water is effective and fast beyond anyone's imagination," the defence minister said. He further stressed that India must realise that there was no space for "dramatics, false flag operations and miscalculations". The defence minister warned that repeating "cliched actions" would en-

tail paying a price much higher than before. "It will be equivalent to committing suicide," he added. Asif said that Pakistan's "everlasting national unity" had provided it strength. "Pakistan's nation, armed forces and the state are moving in a unified direction, and this strength of ours has tipped the balance [in our favour]," he said. He added that Pakistan's armed forces met the demands of modern times and were fully prepared to effectively deal with any possible conflict in the future. "Whatever you may plan or whatever your designs may be, we are far ahead of what you think. The entire nation is standing with us like banyanum marsoos (a solid forti-

fied wall)," the defence minister said, seemingly addressing India. Asif said Pakistan always wanted peace, but "we don't want peace devoid of dignity, security and respect for sovereignty. That's not peace but surrender, and it is completely unacceptable to us." He added that the confidence and determination he saw in the country's youth during Marka-i-Haq inspired him. "The young generation in Pakistan has an understanding of what happened during Marka-i-Haq... Today's generation is different, it is aware and united and has an emotional connection with Pakistan. And it is this sentiment that is the biggest strength for Pakistan's bright future." Asif concluded his message, again seemingly addressing India, saying: "We know who we are, what we can do and where we stand today. If someone is living in the past, relying on old assumptions, my sincere advice is to align your thinking with modern demands. The message is clear: don't let your internal politics and hatred come out. And if this happens, be ready for the response, which will not be in your control and will not remain limited."



### Indonesia eyes e-commerce ban for under 16s

#### NEWS DESK

JAKARTA: Indonesia's government is mulling an e-commerce ban for under-16s, the communications minister told AFP Wednesday, hot on the heels of Jakarta imposing a sweeping social media prohibition for teens. "E-commerce (platforms) are next, because we found children who became scam victims through e-commerce," Communications and Digital Minister Meutya Hafid said in an interview in Jakarta, without providing further details. In March, app-addicted Indonesia started enforcing a social media ban for under-16s in a bid to shield some 70 million children from the threats of online pornography, cyberbullying, and Internet addiction. The policy followed Australia's landmark move in December to stop teenagers holding accounts on many popular platforms.

## Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb calls CMDF launch a 'milestone'

#### SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, on Wednesday, termed the launch of the Capital Market Development Fund (CMDF) a "milestone" and urged coordinated reforms to deepen, broaden and modernize Pakistan's capital markets. Addressing the CMDF signing ceremony organized by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), the finance minister said strong capital markets are essential for sustainable economic growth, mobilizing savings and unlocking long-term financing for key sectors. Aurangzeb said the initiative reflects a collective resolve across institutions rather than any single entity, emphasizing that "robust capital markets are engines of sustainable growth" that enable capital formation, risk-sharing and financing for infrastructure and startups. He outlined four key areas of focus, including the broader capital market framework, the balance between equity and debt markets, the regulatory role of SECP, and the importance of partnerships among stakeholders. Linking economic strategy to recent global and regional developments, the minister said Pakistan must draw lessons from ongoing challenges. He stressed that commercial reserves alone are insufficient, calling for the creation of strategic reserves to strengthen economic resilience. He also underlined the need to accelerate investment in renewable energy, including solar, wind and hydropower, adding that capital markets would play a crucial role in financing this transition. Highlighting the importance of self-reliance, Aurangzeb emphasized building indigenous economic capacity, noting that stronger fiscal buffers could reduce dependence on international assistance during crises such as floods.

"The power of macroeconomic stability lies in our ability to respond to shocks with our own resources," he said, linking economic strength with national and energy security. The minister noted that Pakistan must do away with over-reliance on the banking sector, calling for greater use of capital markets by both the public and private sectors. He acknowledged progress in the equity market, citing the entry of more than 220,000 new investors over the past two years, largely driven by young, tech-savvy participants. However, he expressed concern over the underdevelopment of the debt capital market, saying it had "gone into reverse gear" over the years and requires regulatory reforms, improved ease of doing business, and taxation adjustments to revive corporate bond activity. Aurangzeb also stressed the importance of financial literacy and investor education, urging authorities to focus outreach efforts on Gen-Z and younger investors who are increasingly shaping market trends through digital platforms. On regulation, he described SECP's role as a "fine balancing act" between expanding market participation and ensuring investor protection, fiscal discipline and risk management. He called for simplifying processes and strengthening institutional capacity through reforms in people, processes and technology.

The finance minister emphasized that no single institution can drive reform alone, highlighting the importance of collaboration among regulators, government bodies, investors and private sector stakeholders. He reiterated that the government's role is to provide an enabling environment, while the private sector must lead economic growth, adding that stronger capital markets will be critical in mobilizing domestic resources and supporting long-term development. Aurangzeb said the CMDF initiative would serve as a catalyst in unlocking financing, strengthening market infrastructure and advancing Pakistan's economic transformation.



## Pakistan 'seeks bids' for two LNG cargoes amid supply concerns

Government seeks two cargoes to ensure uninterrupted gas supply in May, say sources

#### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has issued spot tenders to procure liquefied natural gas (LNG) for May, seeking to secure supplies amid growing uncertainty over regional energy shipments, sources told. According to Petroleum Division sources, Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL) has invited bids from international companies for two LNG cargoes. Interested firms have been asked to submit their bids by May 7, with the opening scheduled on the same day. The first LNG cargo is expected to be delivered between May 12 and 14, while the second shipment is scheduled for delivery between May 24 and 26. The move comes as Pakistan seeks to ensure continuity of gas supply amid concerns over disruptions to shipments through the Strait of Hormuz due to escalating tensions in the Middle East, The News reported. Officials said the government is actively pursuing alternative arrangements after QatarEnergy showed reluctance over allowing scheduled cargoes to pass through the strategic waterway amid security risks. Earlier, PLL had awarded an LNG cargo to TotalEnergies at \$18.4 per MMBtu, which was delivered at the end of April and is currently being processed at the Pakistan GasPort Limited terminal at Port Qasim. Authorities say Pakistan requires at least two LNG cargoes for May to meet its energy demand, while diplomatic efforts continue to ensure safe transit of shipments through the region.

## Oil prices fall a second day as Trump indicates possible Iran peace deal

Global markets rally despite ongoing US-Iran tensions over Strait of Hormuz as exchanges continue in Gulf

LONDON: Oil prices fell for a second day on Wednesday on expectations bottled up supply from the key Middle East producing region could resume flowing after US President Donald Trump indicated a possible peace deal may be reached to end the war with Iran. Brent crude futures for July fell \$1.52, or 1.38%, to \$108.35 per barrel as of 0103 GMT, after dropping 4% in the previous session. US benchmark West Texas Intermediate futures for June declined \$1.50, or 1.47%, to \$100.77, after closing down 3.9% the

day before. On Tuesday, Trump unexpectedly said he would briefly pause an operation to help escort ships through the Strait of Hormuz, citing progress toward a comprehensive agreement with Iran, without giving details on the agreement. There was no immediate reaction from Tehran, where it was very early on Wednesday morning. Still, Trump said the US Navy would continue its blockade of Iranian ports. The Strait of Hormuz, which typically carries cargoes equal to about one-fifth of the world's oil and natural gas supply, has been most cut off since the US-Israeli war against Iran began on February 28. The supply loss to the global market has pushed prices higher with Brent trading last week at its highest since March 2022. - DNA


## Pakistani Cadet declared 'Overall Best Foreign Military Cadet'

#### DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Australian Royal Military College (RMC), Duntroon has declared Pakistani Army Cadet Sardar Arsam Abbas (PMA 152 Long Course) the "Overall Best Foreign Military Cadet" on the passing out parade held at RMC Duntroon, Canberra on 5 May 2026. According to an ISPR news release, the award is conferred upon the highest performing foreign military cadets across all facets of training. This is a testament to the highest standards of professionalism, commitment and excellence demonstrated by the junior leadership of the Pakistan Army. The commissioning parade was reviewed by the Australian Chief of Army Lieutenant General Simon Stuart, AO DSC. The event was witnessed by members of the diplomatic corps, including the Pakistani High Commissioner in Canberra, families of graduating cadets and Australian Defence Force officials. Pakistan & Australia share a longstanding military relationship. Since 2013, 7 officers of the Pakistan Army have served as platoon commanders on the faculty of RMC, while 46 Pakistani Army cadets have graduated from this prestigious institution since 2009. This marks the 14th occasion on which a Pakistani Army Cadet has been declared the Overall Best Foreign Military Cadet "including Lieutenant Nasir Hussain Khalid Sulehria Shaheed, Tamgha-e-Basalat, who embraced shahadat on 4 September 2020 in North Waziristan District. The name of Lieutenant Nasir Shaheed is also inscribed on the memorial stone at the RMC parade ground, symbolising the enduring legacy of courage sacrifice and honour of brave Pakistani Army Officers.








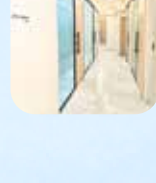


CANBERRA: Pakistani Army Cadet Sardar Arsam Abbas was named the Overall Best Foreign Military Cadet at Australia's Royal Military College, Duntroon! A proud achievement that reflects excellence and leadership, and the enduring Australia-Pakistan partnership. - DNA



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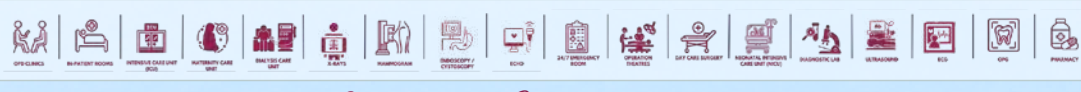
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