



# Islamabad POST

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**Political divide vanished as nation united, says Tarar**

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**Jama takes tariffs reforms with concerned**

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## Briefs

**Pakistan 'rejects' LNG supply bids for May spot cargoes**

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has rejected bids for spot liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargoes for May as the country faces growing uncertainty over energy shipments, sources in the Ministry of Energy said on Friday. The bids were invited by Pakistan LNG Limited (PLNG) for the purchase of two spot LNG cargoes scheduled for delivery between May 12-14 and May 24-26. According to sources, seven bids were received for the two cargoes. The lowest bid for the May 12-14 delivery window stood at \$17.28 per mmbtu. For the May 24-26 delivery window, the lowest offer came in at \$16.98 per mmbtu, the sources said. However, both the lowest bids for spot LNG supply were rejected by the Pakistan LNG Board, according to Ministry of Energy sources. The sources further said that earlier bids for the procurement of two spot LNG cargoes for May had also been rejected. The sources said Qatar had earlier shown reluctance in supplying additional LNG cargoes to Pakistan due to fears surrounding regional security risks and potential disruption to shipping routes in the Strait of Hormuz, according to the report.

**Hantavirus not a threat to public**

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The World Health Organisation (WHO) insisted on Friday that there is a minimal risk from the hantavirus to the general public, as countries prepared to repatriate passengers stuck on a cruise ship hit by a deadly outbreak. Three passengers from the MV Hondius — a Dutch husband and wife and a German woman — have died while others have fallen sick with the rare disease, which usually spreads among rodents. The only hantavirus species that can transmit from person to person — Andes virus — has been confirmed among those who have tested positive, fuelling international concern. The Dutch-flagged vessel, which has around 150 people on board, is expected to arrive in the Spanish Canary Island of Tenerife on Sunday. Special flights will take passengers to their home countries.

**'KSA never allowed anybody to use its airspace'**

DNA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's deputy minister for public diplomacy, Rayed Krimly, denied that the Kingdom had authorised the use of its airspace to support offensive military operations, amid mounting regional tensions and reports circulating online about the Kingdom's position in the ongoing confrontation involving Iran. In his post on X he wrote: "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to stand in support of de-escalation and avoiding escalation, as well as negotiations and the efforts undertaken regarding them, and caution must be exercised with what is attributed in the media to anonymous sources - some of which are claimed to be Saudi - in a manner that contradicts that."

## Iran accuses UAE, Bahrain US and Iran exchange fire, but Trump says ceasefire in effect

Iran's military said the US targeted two ships entering the Strait of Hormuz and carried out strikes on Iranian territory. The US military said it fired in response to Iranian attacks

NEWS DESK / DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States and Iran exchanged fire on Thursday in the most serious test yet of their month-long ceasefire, but Iran said the situation returned to normal while the US said it did not want to escalate. The renewed hostilities broke out as Washington was awaiting Iran's response to a US proposal that would stop the fighting but leave the most contentious issues, such as Iran's nuclear programme, unresolved for now. Iran's military said the US targeted two ships entering the Strait of Hormuz and carried out strikes on Iranian territory. The US military said it fired in response to Iranian attacks. Trump told reporters the ceasefire was still in effect and sought to play down the exchange. "They trifled with us today. We blew them away," Trump said, while inspecting renovations to the Lincoln Memorial's reflecting pool in Washington. Meanwhile, Iran's top joint military command accused the US of violating the ceasefire by targeting an Iranian oil tanker and another ship, and of carrying out air attacks on civilian areas on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz and the nearby coastal areas of Bandar Khamir and Sirik on the mainland. The military said it responded by attacking US military vessels east of the strait and south of the port of Chabahar. A spokesperson for Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters said the Iranian strikes inflicted "significant damage," but US Central Command said none of its assets were hit.

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## MPs challenge ambiguity over Israeli Nukes

DNA

WASHINGTON: Nearly 30 Democratic lawmakers have urged US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to end Washington's longstanding ambiguity over Israel's alleged nuclear weapons programme, arguing that such secrecy has become untenable during the ongoing war on Iran. Israel is widely believed to be in possession of nuclear weapons, though it neither acknowledges nor denies having a nuclear arsenal. In a May 4 letter addressed to Secretary Rubio, the lawmakers said the US was "currently engaged in a war against Iran, a conflict with nuclear dimensions that the administration has not adequately addressed with Congress or the American public". The move is led by Congressman Joaquin Castro, a senior Democratic lawmaker from Texas who has served in the US House of Representatives since 2013 and is known for his work on foreign policy and intelligence-related issues, including his tenure on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

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## To collect toll

## Iran establishes Persian Gulf Strait Authority

*The Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA) will approve ship transits, collect tolls, and position itself as the primary authority for passage through the narrow waterway*

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran has launched a new government agency to regulate shipping traffic and impose tolls on vessels passing through the strategic Strait of Hormuz, even as it redirects a seized tanker and its foreign minister accuses the United States of undermining diplomatic efforts with military actions. The Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA) will approve ship transits, collect tolls, and position itself as the primary authority for passage through the narrow waterway, which handles a significant portion of global oil trade. According to shipping intelligence firm Lloyd's List, the agency has begun emailing application forms to operators and is requiring permissions, payments in Iranian rials via local banks, and adherence to specific corridors and conditions.

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## Pentagon releases secret files

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon on Friday released a first batch of previously secret files documenting reported sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) — some as far back as the 1940s — a move sought for decades by some Americans. "These files, hidden behind classifications, have long fueled justified speculation — and it's time the American people see it for themselves," War Secretary Pete Hegseth said in a statement. More than 160 files were released on Friday on the website of

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## IMF approves 1.2 billion tranche for Pakistan

The IMF said the approval comes after Pakistan successfully met key structural benchmarks, including tax policy measures and adjustments in energy pricing, aimed at strengthening fiscal discipline and improving macroeconomic stability

DNA

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Executive Board on Friday approved the latest review of Pakistan's reform programme, paving the way for the release of \$1.2 billion in financing under the ongoing arrangements. In Islamabad, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb also confirmed the approval following the Board meeting in Washington, saying the decision reflects Pakistan's continued progress on difficult but necessary economic reforms. The disbursement includes around \$1 billion under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and approximately \$210 million under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). With this tranche, total disbursements under the

current programme rise to about \$4.5 billion. The IMF said the approval comes after Pakistan successfully met key structural benchmarks, including tax policy measures and adjustments in energy pricing, aimed at strengthening fiscal discipline and improving macroeconomic stability. Officials said the programme continues to focus on rebuilding foreign exchange reserves, containing inflationary pressures, and maintaining a tighter fiscal stance amid ongoing external and regional economic challenges. According to programme details, Pakistan's reform path going forward will emphasise sustaining a primary budget surplus of around 2 per cent of GDP, broadening the tax base, and improving compliance in

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## High profile terrorist killed in KP

BUREAU REPORT

BANNU: A high-profile terrorist who was killed in a recent operation by security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district was a member of the Afghan Taliban regime's special forces, security sources said on Friday. Security sources said the terrorist, Fatehullah alias Mudassar, was an active member of Yarmook 60 Special Forces Battalion. The unit operates under the Taliban regime's Ministry of Interior Affairs. They added that Fatehullah belonged to the Zarmat district of Afghanistan's Paktia province and was actively involved in terrorist activities in Pakistan alongside the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Reports further suggest that he was also involved in facilitating cross-border terrorist networks and

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## Kelly a potential challenger to Trump

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: A courtroom clash with US War Secretary Pete Hegseth is rapidly transforming Democratic Senator Mark Kelly into one of the most closely watched potential challengers to President Donald Trump ahead of the 2028 US presidential election. A federal appeals court on Thursday appeared sceptical of Pentagon efforts to punish the retired astronaut and Navy officer over remarks urging US troops to refuse illegal orders, with judges sharply questioning whether the government's case could stand constitutional scrutiny.

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DHAKA: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi offers Fateha at the grave of late Khalida Zia during his recent visit to Bangladesh. — DNA

## DPM Ishaq Dar says

**Pakistan coordinating with US for return of seafarers from seized vessel**  
*11 Pakistani, 20 Iranian seafarers aboard vessels currently near Singaporean waters, says deputy prime minister*

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has said that Pakistan is in close coordination with the United States and other stakeholders to secure the safety and prompt return of its 11 seafarers aboard vessels seized by US authorities. "...11 Pakistani and 20 Iranian seafarers, aboard vessels seized by US authorities and currently near Singaporean waters," DPM Dar posted on X. "Pakistan, through its Foreign Office and relevant authorities, is closely coordinating with US authorities and others to ensure the safety, welfare, and earliest possible return of our nationals," he wrote. The deputy prime minister said that he spoke with the Iranian and Singaporean foreign ministers on Thursday as part of Pakistan's efforts to secure the safe return of Pakistani and Iranian seafarers. DPM Dar said that during his phone call with Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, he requested the Southeast Asian country's support for


Continued on Page 06

## 'No forced deportations of Pakistani from UAE'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Interior has taken notice of speculative reporting in sections of media especially social media about targeted deportations of Pakistani nationals from brotherly Islamic country of UAE. Having gone through the details and data it is necessary to state that all such reporting is malafide and part of vicious propaganda by vested interest. No country or sect specific deportations from any country including UAE are being carried out. Deportations if any are a routine process in line with the host country regulations and legal system, violations of their laws and overstay / illegal documentation. At the same time Pakistani



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## Minister stresses unity in conflicts as key to victory

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal praised Pakistan forces for defeating a country six times larger than it during Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos, emphasizing that the operation not only highlighted the operational readiness of Pakistan's armed forces but also demonstrated the collective spirit of the nation during the critical time.

"Those six days united people under one umbrella, overcoming divisions of caste, sect, religion, province, and other differences," he said. While talking to media, he said that during May 2025, all hostile designs that the enemy had long been plotting against the beloved homeland were decisively thwarted, sending a clear message to all those seeking to undermine the country. "The unity shown during the conflict boosted people's morale, overcame fear, and sent a clear message of victory," he said, adding, "No one can defeat the nation with this passion." Minister hailed the role of leaders, especially Chief of Defense Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the success of "Marka-e-Haq" (the Battle for Truth), saying the political and military leadership remained united throughout the situation, ensuring stability, discipline and effective communication. "Strong leadership helped maintain public confidence, reflecting the trust of people during tense moments," he said. He also paid every personnel of the Pakistani forces, deployed to defend Pakistan. He said that Pakistan's armed forces and people stood shoulder to shoulder, delivering a firm and effective response to the enemy, thereby safeguarding the country's sovereignty and dignity.—APP

## CM KP addresses Khyber Girls Medical College

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (CMKP), Muhammad Sohail Afridi, addressed the convocation ceremony of Khyber Girls Medical College on Friday and congratulated the graduating students and their parents on their academic achievement. He stated that the success of the graduates was not only a matter of pride for their families and institution, but for the entire province. The CM urged the graduating students to pursue their professional careers with dedication, compassion, and the highest standards of professional integrity, noting the critical importance of strengthening the province's healthcare workforce, particularly through greater participation of women in the medical profession. He further emphasized that young people, especially women, must confidently assert their rights and contribute actively to the province's social and economic development, assuring them of the provincial government's continued support. The CM conferred degrees upon the graduating students and awarded gold medals to outstanding graduates in recognition of their academic excellence. The college's annual performance report was also presented on the occasion, highlighting its key achievements at both the provincial and national levels.—APP

# 5,000 new Thalassemia cases reported annually in Punjab

The speaker said Pakistan had over 10 million carriers of thalassemia, while nearly 5,000 children were born with thalassemia major every year, underscoring the gravity of the issue. He emphasised that awareness and timely screening were essential to prevent the disease

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said on Friday that thalassemia was a serious hereditary disease, with around 5,000 new patients being registered every year in Pakistan. He was addressing a special awareness seminar organised in connection with World Thalassemia Day at the Punjab Assembly by Sundas Foundation, where he attended as the chief guest. The seminar focused on prevention of thalassemia, improved patient care and raising public awareness. It was attended by Founder and President Sundas Foundation Muhammad Yaseen Khan, Director Khalid Abbas Dar, members of the Provincial Assembly, doctors, social workers and people from different walks of life. The speaker said Pakistan had over 10 million carriers of thalassemia, while nearly 5,000 children

were born with thalassemia major every year, underscoring the gravity of the issue. He emphasised that awareness and timely screening were essential to prevent the disease. He said the Punjab Assembly had taken a key step by passing the Punjab Thalassemia Prevention Act 2025, under which screening and genetic counselling were being promoted. He added that free thalassemia testing facilities were being provided to citizens, while special centres were being established in 21 districts and 15 tehsil hospitals across the province. Paying tribute to Sundas Foundation, Malik Ahmad Khan said the organisation had been serving humanity since 1998 by providing free treatment and care to patients suffering from thalassemia, hemophilia and other blood disorders. He assured that the government and Punjab As-

sembly would continue to extend full cooperation to the foundation. On the occasion, Founder Sundas Foundation Muhammad Yaseen Khan said legislation for mandatory pre-marital thalassemia screening was a historic step that would help reduce the spread of the disease. He appreciated the role of the speaker in passage of the law and termed it a guarantee for a healthier future generation. Sundas Foundation Director Khalid Abbas Dar, in his concluding remarks, thanked the chief guest and participants and stressed that collective awareness and preventive measures, particularly pre-marital screening, were essential to combat thalassemia. Awareness material related to thalassemia was also distributed among participants, who appreciated the legislative and awareness efforts and reiterated their commitment to a thalassemia-free society.—DNA

# Malaysian envoy visits Aghosh college Murree

Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan shared insights on Malaysia's history, multicultural society, economic development and the country's education system, while also highlighting the longstanding bilateral relations between Malaysia and Pakistan



## DNA

MURREE: High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, undertook a working visit to Aghosh College Murree as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen educational, humanitarian and people-to-people relations between Malaysia and Pakistan, particularly with welfare institutions and non-governmental organisations engaged in youth

and community development. Upon arrival, the High Commissioner was warmly received by Prof. Dr. Hafeez ur Rahman, President of Al Khidmat Foundation Pakistan, together with the management and senior administration of the College. During the visit, H.E. Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan was given a comprehensive briefing on the facilities, academic environment and development initiatives of the institution, followed by a tour of the College

campus and its various facilities. During the discussions, both sides exchanged views on strengthening cooperation in the fields of education, youth empowerment and capacity building. Particular emphasis was placed on enhancing linkages through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP), including opportunities for academic exchanges, training initiatives and scholarship programmes for students between Malay-

sia and Pakistan. The discussions also highlighted the importance of expanding institutional collaboration to provide greater educational exposure and professional development opportunities for young people from both countries. A key highlight of the visit was the High Commissioner's interactive engagement session with the students of the College. Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan shared insights on Malaysia's

history, multicultural society, economic development and the country's education system, while also highlighting the longstanding bilateral relations between Malaysia and Pakistan. The session was followed by an engaging question-and-answer segment, during which students actively posed questions on Malaysia's culture, higher education opportunities, technological advancement, tourism sector and regional role within ASEAN. As

part of the programme, Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan distributed 300 packs of Malaysian delicacies, namely Nasi Lemak and Mee Goreng, to the students and staff of Aghosh College Murree as a gesture of goodwill from Malaysia. In conjunction with the visit, the High Commissioner was also accorded the honour of planting a sapling within the College grounds, symbolising the enduring bonds, shared prosperity and growing relations between Malaysia and Pakistan.

## Balochistan, ADB devises uplift partnership

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, met with an Asian Development Bank (ADB) delegation led by Country Director Xiaojin (Emma) Fan to discuss a long-term partnership across critical sectors, including water resources, agriculture, minerals and mining, education, health, information technology, skills development, and job creation. The Balochistan government has finalized a ten-year comprehensive development plan aimed at ensuring sustainable progress across multiple sectors. The high-level meeting focused on investment opportunities and collaborative strategies, with the ADB delegation expressing strong interest in long-term investment and financial support, particularly in projects such as the Kachhi Canal and other

er water and agricultural initiatives. Both sides agreed to adopt joint strategies for practical projects in education, healthcare, IT, vocational training, and youth employment. Chief Minister Bugti welcomed the involvement of international and national development partners, emphasizing that Balochistan is being developed into a secure, peaceful, and attractive region for investment. Bugti highlighted that despite limited resources, the provincial government is prioritizing people-centric projects to address underdevelopment and ensure lasting benefits. He noted: "We have prepared a ten-year plan to guarantee phased reforms and development measures across key sectors. Our government is committed to effective governance, transparency, and merit-based reforms to achieve

sustainable growth." Progress in education was underscored, with 3,200 closed schools reopened and 2,100 new community-based schools established, shifting the focus toward quality education, modern facilities, and human resource development. The Chief Minister assured investors of full support and effective security, stressing the government's capacity to protect and implement mega projects while mobilizing resources to create new economic opportunities. The meeting was also attended by Provincial Minister for Development and Planning Mir Zahoore Ahmed Buledi, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Development Zahid Saleem, and Additional Secretary Chief Minister Secretariat Muhammad Fareedun.—DNA

## Ceremony held at BISP to pay tribute armed forces

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, on Friday saluted the martyrs, veterans, and brave soldiers of Pakistan, congratulating them on the victory in Marka-e-Haq, and declared that due to this remarkable success, the Pakistani passport has become a "Passport of Pride." She was speaking at a ceremony organised at the BISP Headquarters under the auspices of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) to commemorate the successful achievements of the Pakistan Armed Forces in Marka-e-Haq. The event was attended by Secretary BISP Amer Ali Ahmed, Additional Secretary Dr Asmat Nawaz, senior officials, and a large number of BISP employees. Addressing the ceremony, Senator Rubina Khalid said that Pakistan's positive image at the global level today is the result of Marka-e-Haq. She stated that the courage, wisdom, and professional excellence demonstrated by the Pakistan Armed Forces during Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos in responding to India are a matter of immense pride for the entire nation. She further said that the hosting of peace talks in Islamabad reflects Pakistan's major diplomatic success. Senator Rubina Khalid paid tribute to the mothers, sisters, and sons who sacrificed their loved ones for the homeland, adding that the entire nation is proud of its martyrs and veterans. The Chairperson emphasised that political differences may exist, but Pakistan always comes first for all of us. She remarked that the dignity and respect Pakistan enjoys today are the result of the sacrifices and achievements of the Pakistan Armed Forces. She added that for overseas Pakistanis, the Pakistani passport has now become a true "Passport of Pride." Speaking on the occasion, Secretary BISP Amer Ali Ahmed said that due to Marka-e-Haq, Pakistan has emerged as a significant player on the international stage, where global peace dialogues are now being hosted. He stated that when India launched aggression against Pakistan a year ago, the Pakistan Armed Forces stood like a solid wall against the enemy and shattered all misconceptions of India. He further said that following the success of Marka-e-Haq, the slogan "Pakistan Hamesha Zindabad" has become the collective voice of the nation. During the ceremony, national songs and patriotic anthems were presented. The enthusiasm of the BISP staff was remarkable, and all officers and employees paid rich tribute to the achievements and sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces.—APP

## Marka-e-Haq's ignites national revolution: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD: Marking the first anniversary of Marka-e-Haq and Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos, Mushaal Hussein Mullick and a responsible regional power that chose restraint, diplomacy and peace despite facing a much larger enemy. Congratulating the nation, armed forces and Kashmiris on the completion of one year of Marka-e-Haq, she described the victory as "spiritual, moral, military and collective," asserting that Pakistan's response had shattered India's image globally and brought renewed international attention to the unresolved Kashmir dispute. "The real issue is Kashmir," she said, adding that the conflict had forced the world to once again confront one of the oldest un-

resolved disputes linked to the right of self-determination. Mushaal maintained that Kashmir and Palestine had become the "epicentres of the new world order," warning that unresolved occupations continued to threaten regional and global peace. She alleged that India had failed to provide credible evidence regarding the Pahalgam incident and accused New Delhi of repeatedly using "false flag operations" to malign Pakistan and suppress the Kashmiri freedom movement. Referring to Pakistan's military response, she praised the armed forces, particularly the Pakistan Air Force and soldiers on the frontlines, saying they had delivered a "historic lesson" to the enemy.—DNA



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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### MAY

May 03/Poland National Day
May 06/Bulgaria Armed Forces Day
May 06/UAE Armed Forces Day
May 07/Kazakhstan Armed Forces Day
May 08/Czech Republic National Day
May 09/European Union National Day
May 17/Norway Constitution Day
May 21/Hungary Armed Forces Day
May 22/Yemen Republic Re-unification Day(National Day)
May 24/Eritrea National Day
May 25/Lebanon Liberation and Resistance Day
May 25/Argentina National Day
May 25/Jordan Independence Day
May 28/Azerbaijan Republic Day
May 28/Ethiopia National Day
May 31/Brunei Armed Forces Day
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WASA Rawalpindi...5555489
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CHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



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RDA.....5555864
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Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

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# NUML marks Marka-e-Haq 1st anniversary with great fervor

Addressing the audience, Aniq Nisar emphasized the significance of Marka-e-Haq, stating that India's attempts to isolate Pakistan had been completely defeated and that Pakistan had emerged as a global stabilizing force



## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Modern Languages organized a seminar to commemorate the spirit of Marka-e-Haq and Operation Bunyanum Marsoos with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervor. Former Ambassador and former President of AJK, Sardar Masood Khan, and renowned journalist and anchorperson Aniq Nisar attended the event as guest speakers. The seminar was graced by Rector NUML, Maj Gen (R) Shahid Mahmood Kayani, HI(M), Director General NUML, Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan, along with deans, directors, faculty members, and a large number of students. Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, Dr. Riaz Shad, delivered the welcome address and highlighted the importance of commemorating national milestones that strengthen unity and patriotism among the youth. Addressing the audience, Aniq Nisar emphasized the significance of Marka-

e-Haq, stating that India's attempts to isolate Pakistan had been completely defeated and that Pakistan had emerged as a global stabilizing force. She discussed the importance of narratives in modern warfare and the need to effectively counter misinformation and propaganda. Referring to the Pahalgam incident, she remarked that exposing the gaps and inconsistencies in India's narrative prevented it from gaining international acceptance. She further stated that India's attempts to portray itself as a peaceful state while labeling Pakistan as a terrorist country would never succeed. She praised the youth of Pakistan for their active role during Marka-e-Haq in countering false narratives on digital and social media platforms. "It is time for Pakistan to rise higher. No one should underestimate this nation," she said. Former Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan paid rich tribute to the martyrs of the homeland and described Operation Bunyanum Marsoos as a de-

fining moment in Pakistan's history. He stated that despite India's larger military strength, Pakistan demonstrated exceptional capability both diplomatically and militarily. He reiterated that Pakistan is a peace-loving nation and desires regional stability and peace. He termed Marka-e-Haq a symbol of national unity and urged students to conduct research on the subject to better understand its historical and strategic significance. Sardar Masood Khan also appreciated Pakistan's mediatory role in international conflicts, including efforts related to the United States and Iran, stating that Pakistan had successfully positioned itself on the global stage as a responsible and influential country. Addressing the youth, he encouraged them to remain focused, united, and committed to the development of the country. He stressed the importance of acquiring modern skills and understanding the impact of social media and technology in contemporary

warfare. He urged students to work on self-development and contribute positively towards making Pakistan a stronger and more prosperous nation. In his concluding remarks, Rector NUML, Maj Gen (R) Shahid Mahmood Kayani, HI(M), said that seminars promoting nationalism and patriotism play a vital role in strengthening the spirit of unity among the younger generation. He described Marka-e-Haq as a blessing of Allah Almighty and stated that all attempts by enemies to destabilize Pakistan had failed and would continue to fail. He emphasized that Pakistan had demonstrated to the world the strength and resilience of its people and that unity remains the nation's greatest power. Addressing the students, he advised them to remain steadfast in their faith and values by holding firmly to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah. The seminar concluded with renewed enthusiasm and a strong message of unity, patriotism, and national resilience among the participants.

# PSW, TDAP sign MoU to boost exports

The partnership will also include joint capacity-building sessions under which PSW will provide orientation to TDAP officials on new digital modules and regulatory updates

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Single Window (PSW) and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to accelerate the digitalisation of Pakistan's trade ecosystem, with a focus on improving regulatory efficiency and providing integrated, modern services to exporters and importers. "As the lead entity for Pakistan's digital trade transformation, PSW will work closely with TDAP to harmonise export facilitation processes and integrate key digital platforms, including TDAP's Pakistan Trade Portal and Exporters Directory, into the broader PSW environment," a news release said on Friday. It added that the integration is intended to provide traders with seamless, real-time access to critical trade information and services while reducing reliance on manual procedures. While PSW provides the digital framework for these reforms, TDAP serves as the country's premier trade promotion organisation. Under the agreement, TDAP will use its network of regional offices, trade associations and international

connections to identify and engage stakeholders that can benefit from PSW's digital reforms. TDAP will also provide PSW with dedicated space at its flagship domestic events to expand outreach and encourage the adoption of paperless trade tools. The collaboration also places strong emphasis on data-driven decision-making. The two organisations will engage in secure trade data-sharing to support market analysis and the development of evidence-based policies aimed at benefiting the local trade community. The initiative also includes the joint development of export-readiness toolkits and compliance checklists to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) better navigate global market requirements. A key component of the MoU is its focus on gender-responsive trade facilitation. PSW and TDAP will coordinate efforts to enhance the export readiness and digital inclusion of women-led enterprises. This includes encouraging entrepreneurs from the WTO Award-winning Khadijah Women Entrepreneurship Programme to

participate in international exhibitions and trade delegations organised under TDAP's annual business plan. PSW Chief Executive Officer Aftab Haider highlighted the significance of the partnership, saying, "Our collaboration with TDAP is another step towards creating a unified, inclusive and equitable trade ecosystem." The TDAP-PSW collaboration, he said, would help leverage PSW's data collection and dissemination capabilities to facilitate targeted interventions by TDAP for cross-border trade promotion, with a special focus on women entrepreneurs, while PSW will benefit from TDAP's experience and expertise to improve its services and knowledge products," he added. The partnership will also include joint capacity-building sessions under which PSW will provide orientation to TDAP officials on new digital modules and regulatory updates. The initiative is aimed at ensuring both organisations provide consistent, high-quality guidance to the trade community, further strengthening Pakistan's maritime and trade footprint.—DNA

# Ahad stresses projects transparency

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema on Friday chaired a meeting to review and deliberate on key reforms proposed in the Public Private Partnership Authority (P3A) law, aimed at improving governance, transparency, efficiency and implementation mechanisms for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects in Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatization Muhammad Ali, Secretary Privatization Division Hammad Shamimi, Secretary Privatization Commission Usman Akhtar Bajwa, Secretary Law and Justice Raja Naem Akbar, besides senior officials of P3A, who briefed the minister on the proposed legal and structural amendments under consideration, said a news release. During the meeting, Ahad Cheema highlighted the government's commitment to introducing constructive and forward-looking reforms aimed at strengthening institutional performance and ensuring greater transparency and accountability in PPP projects. He acknowledged the proposed amendments to the P3A law and appreciated the efforts being undertaken to improve the overall framework governing public-private partnerships in the country. The meeting was informed that under the proposed reforms, the Cabinet Committee on Privatization would be further strengthened, while P3A would focus more on the implementation and execution of projects. It was further discussed that, in line with the directions of the Prime Minister, P3A would be placed under the Privatization Division instead of the Planning Division to ensure better coordination, institutional alignment and improved efficiency in handling PPP initiatives. The proposed changes also include the development of a structured project pipeline and bidding mechanism to improve project planning and enhance investor confidence. The new mechanism would also encourage the participation of business councils and chambers in the development of project pipelines.—DNA

# ICCI hails court verdict against 'deemed income' tax on properties

On the occasion, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub maintained that the decision would help revive investor confidence and encourage documented investment in the property sector

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sardar Tahir Mehmood has welcomed the landmark decision declaring Section 7-E of the Income Tax Ordinance 2001 unconstitutional, stating that the move would provide a major relief to the real estate sector and restore investors' confidence. Talking to visiting business community leaders belonging to real estate sector here on Friday, he said that Section 7-E had empowered the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to impose tax on "deemed income" from immovable properties even when property owners were not actually earning any income from them. He termed the court's verdict a positive development

for the economy, particularly for the real estate and construction sectors which had suffered badly due to the controversial provision. Sardar Tahir Mehmood observed that the real estate sector is one of the key drivers of economic activity and supports dozens of allied industries including steel, cement, tiles, paint, transport and labour. He added that the imposition of tax on assumed income had created uncertainty among investors and discouraged genuine investment in the property market. He expressed the hope that after the abolition of Section 7-E, investment activities in the real estate sector would regain momentum, leading to increased business opportunities, employment generation and higher economic growth. He also urged the government to formulate

business-friendly taxation policies in consultation with stakeholders to ensure sustainable economic progress. On the occasion, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub said that the business community had consistently raised concerns over Section 7-E, terming it unjustified and detrimental to economic activity. He maintained that the decision would help revive investor confidence and encourage documented investment in the property sector. Meanwhile, Vice President Muhammad Irfan Chaudhry said that rational and fair taxation policies were essential for promoting investment and strengthening the economy. He added that the business community expects the government to introduce reforms aimed at facilitating taxpayers instead of creating unnecessary hurdles for businesses and investors.

# NEOC calls for parental support during Polio drive in targeted 79 districts

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson of the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), Dr Israr ul Haq, on Friday, noted a promising decline in polio cases in 2026, stressing the need for stakeholder cooperation and public participation in the Sub-National Immunization drive scheduled for 18-24 May in 79 districts, while appealing to parents for full compliance. While speaking in an exclusive conversation with a local media outlet, a NEOC official stressed that achieving a polio-free future for children is a collective national duty, calling on parents to fully support vaccination teams in their efforts. He also urged families to welcome health workers and ensure that every eligible child is administered the essential polio drops without delay. Dr Israr ul Haq further highlighted the current progress in polio eradication efforts in Pakistan, stating that only three cases have been reported this year, with two from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and one from Sindh. He said that although the reduction in cases is encouraging, it is still premature to celebrate and sustained efforts are required to fully eliminate the disease. He emphasized that the fight against polio remains ongoing and demands continuous vigilance and cooperation from all segments of society.—APP

# Pak restraint after Pahalgam exposed India's narrative

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Kashmir Institute of International Relations Altaf Hussain Wani said that India's handling of the Pahalgam incident last year, followed by military escalation against Pakistan and crackdowns in occupied Kashmir, exposed New Delhi's "false narrative" before the international community, while Pakistan emerged as a responsible regional peace actor through restraint, diplomacy and military preparedness. In an interview to media, on the first anniversary of Marka-e-Haq and Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, Wani alleged that the attack in Pahalgam had occurred near an Indian elite force camp, yet security personnel failed to respond for hours despite their close proximity. He claimed that India blamed Pakistan and the Kashmiri resistance immediately after the incident without presenting credible evidence and subsequently launched widespread operations across occupied Kashmir. "Several people were killed in different operations, but India failed to prove their involvement in the incident," he said, alleging that nearly 20 Kashmiris lost their lives during the crackdown period. Wani further accused India of targeting civilian infrastructure in Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir through missile strikes, saying those killed were civilians with no links to military organisations.—APP

# Weekly inflation up by 0.79pc

ISLAMABAD: The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) based weekly inflation increased by 0.79 percent during the week ended on May 07, 2026, for the combined consumption group, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Friday. According to PBS data, SPI for the week under review rose to 357.04 points as compared to 354.23 points recorded in the previous week. On a year-on-year basis, the SPI increased by 15.16 percent. The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16 = 100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group (up to Rs 17,732) increased by 0.69 percent to 334.45 points from 332.16 points. The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,733-22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175; and above Rs 44,175 increased by 0.77 percent, 0.76 percent, 0.83 percent and 0.80 percent, respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 22 items (43.14 percent) increased, 14 items (27.45 percent) decreased, while 15 items (29.41 percent) remained stable. A major increase was observed in the prices of chicken, which rose by 12.82 percent, followed by diesel by 5.10 percent, wheat flour 3.42 percent, petrol 1.66 percent, curd 1.63 percent, fresh milk 1.33 percent, beef 0.65 percent, tea prepared 0.53 percent, mutton 0.50 percent, potatoes 0.48 percent, washing soap 0.12 percent and cigarettes by 0.08 percent. On the other hand, prices of tomatoes declined by 7.08 percent, garlic 1.91 percent, eggs 1.22 percent, LPG 1.08 percent, pulse masoor 0.43 percent, onions 0.38 percent, pulse gram 0.36 percent, rice IRRI-6/9 0.30 percent and gur 0.19 percent. On a year-on-year basis, the SPI for the week under review increased by 15.16 percent compared to the corresponding week of last year. During the period, a major increase was recorded in the prices of petrol by 58.32 percent, diesel 55.76 percent, electricity charges for Q1 52.58 percent, wheat flour 50.65 percent, LPG 48.82 percent and onions 41.97 percent. Prices of mutton, chili powder, garlic, beef, powdered milk and bananas also increased. Meanwhile, prices of potatoes declined by 44.58 percent, pulse gram by 20.29 percent, sugar by 13.76 percent, salt powder by 13.26 percent, pulse masoor by 11.74 percent, eggs by 7.88 percent, chicken by 1.80 percent and pulse moong by 1.60 percent over the same period of last year, PBS reported.—DNA

## Briefs

**'Marka-e-Haq' represents Pakistan's strong standing**

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Senator Sherry Rehman on Friday said Pakistan has maintained a consistent, disciplined and peace-oriented diplomatic policy alongside strong defensive capability, stating that "Marka-e-Haq" reflects the country's stable international standing and strategic balance. While in an exclusive conversation with a private news channel, Sherry Rehman lauded the country's leadership, saying that "Marka-e-Haq" reflects Pakistan's steady, peace-driven diplomacy and its strong strategic posture at the international level. Sherry Rehman said Pakistan has never initiated conflict against any country and has always upheld a consistent policy of restraint and responsibility. She emphasized that Pakistan possesses full capability to defend its sovereignty, while consistently preferring dialogue over confrontation. She further stated that Pakistan has always believed in diplomatic engagement and "cool-headed" negotiations, encouraging other countries as well to resolve disputes through talks rather than escalation. Senator Rehman added that Pakistan's diplomacy is firmly rooted in peace and constructive engagement, and that restraint has always been a guiding principle of its foreign policy.—APP

**Minister assures full support to parliamentary committees**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, on Friday assured full institutional support to parliamentary committees working on issues related to crimes against women. Speaking in the Senate, he said the government will provide all necessary assistance whenever a committee seeks input from any minister or government department. He added that efforts to strengthen the justice system will continue to receive full support from the government. He said cooperation between the government and parliamentary committees is important for better governance and timely delivery of justice. He also assured that all necessary steps will be taken in this regard.—APP

# Aga Khan Foundation Pak and Bank Alfalah partner for a cause

We are grateful to Bank Alfalah for their timely support and collaboration in reaching the most affected communities.



## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan, in partnership with Bank Alfalah, one of the leading commercial banks in Pakistan, has launched a rehabilitation programme to restore critical infrastructure and strengthen resilience in flood-affected communities across Gilgit-Baltistan. The initiative will be implemented in collaboration with Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, Focus Humanitarian Assistance, and Aga Khan Rural Support Programme. The event was attended by His Excellency Salem Mohammed Alzaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, alongside senior leadership from Bank Alfalah and the Aga Khan Foundation. The gathering brought together key stakeholders from the development community, including the Asian Development Bank, Global Affairs Canada, the European Union, and Concern Worldwide, reflecting a strong, multi-partner commitment to advancing climate resilience and community rehabilitation efforts in

the region. The programme follows the devastating impacts of the August 2025 monsoon floods, which triggered flash floods, debris flows, cloudbursts, and glacial lake outburst floods across the region. According to assessments, key community infrastructure, including drinking water supply systems, irrigation channels, bridges, and homes, sustained extensive damage, leaving many vulnerable communities without access to essential services.

Key interventions include the rehabilitation of multiple drinking water supply schemes to restore access to safe water for thousands of households, reconstruction of irrigation channels to revive agricultural livelihoods, and construction of flood mitigation structures to protect vulnerable settlements and land from future hazards. Additionally, the replenishment of emergency winterized tents will enhance disaster preparedness in high-risk valleys. With a total project budget of PKR 57.05 million, including a PKR 50 million grant from Bank Alfalah, and PKR 7.05 million from Aga Khan Foundation, the initiative will focus on restoring safe drinking water supply schemes, rehabilitating irrigation channels, constructing flood protection

works, and replenishing emergency shelter stocks. The project will directly benefit over 10,600 individuals and indirectly support nearly 13,000 people across the districts of Gilgit, Ghizer, and Hunza. The project will also include a PKR 9.3 million partnership for providing a 25KV solar system for a school in Chitral to facilitate students and faculty members. Implementation will be guided by strong community engagement and coordination with local authorities to ensure that the most vulnerable populations are prioritized. The programme is designed with a focus on sustainability, with community ownership and maintenance mechanisms embedded to ensure long-term functionality of rehabilitated infrastructure. In this context, it is worth highlighting the prominent role played by the United Arab Emirates in advancing global sustainability and climate action efforts, through the implementation of development and humanitarian initiatives that strengthen community resilience to environmental challenges. These efforts are a natural extension of the longstanding and historic relations between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, which are rooted in close cooperation and a strategic partnership,

particularly in the areas of sustainable development, humanitarian assistance, and support to communities affected by natural disasters. Atif Bajwa, the President and CEO of Bank Alfalah Limited, emphasised the commitment of Bank to contribute to the development of communities in Pakistan and shared, "We are proud to partner with the Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan in launching this vital rehabilitation initiative, reflecting our enduring commitment to responsible banking and driving meaningful community investment. Guided by our focus on customers, colleagues, community, and country, this programme reinforces our resolve to support flood-impacted communities." Akhtar Iqbal, the Chief Executive Officer of Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan noted that, "This partnership reflects our shared commitment to not only rebuild what has been lost but to strengthen the resilience of communities against future shocks. By restoring essential infrastructure such as water systems and irrigation networks, and investing in preparedness, we are enabling families in Gilgit-Baltistan to recover with dignity and security. We are grateful to Bank Alfalah for their timely support and collaboration in reaching the most affected communities."

## Dasu HPP trains 31 women from Upper Kohistan as LHVs

Teachers and local participants appreciated the initiative, saying such activities help improve students' health, confidence and school attendance while promoting awareness in local communities.

ISLAMABAD: WAPDA's Dasu Hydropower Project (DHPP) has completed the training of 31 women from Upper Kohistan as Lady Health Visitors under a Rs. 58.8 million corporate social responsibility initiative aimed at improving maternal and child healthcare services in the project area. Gwadar Pro quoting an official statement on Friday, that the women underwent professional training at the Abbottabad Public Health School as part of the project's community development program. The initiative is intended to strengthen healthcare access in Upper Kohistan, particularly for women and children living in remote areas with limited medical facilities. The newly trained Lady Health Visitors will support local communities by providing basic healthcare services, maternal and child health guidance, and awareness programs. In April, DHPP also organized a Health and Hygiene Kit Distribution Drive at Government High School Shatial to promote student well-being and awareness about personal hygiene. Under the initiative, 140 health and hygiene kits were distributed among students from classes 6th to 10th. The kits included essential hygiene items aimed at promoting cleanliness and preventing common illnesses. Students were also briefed on the importance of regular handwashing, personal care and maintaining a clean environment as part of healthy daily practices. Teachers and local participants appreciated the initiative, saying such activities help improve students' health, confidence and school attendance while promoting awareness in local communities. The DHPP, one of the country's major hydropower schemes, is also carrying out various social welfare and community support initiatives for residents of the project region.—DNA

## Special documentary marks one year of "Marka-e-Haq" success

ISLAMABAD: A special documentary has been released marking one year since the success of "Marka-e-Haq," highlighting Pakistan's reliance on multi-domain operations in response to Indian provocations. The documentary states that Pakistan responded to Indian aggression through coordinated multi-domain warfare, demonstrating operational strength across multiple domains. Pakistani drones ensured continuous surveillance and monitoring of sensitive areas, maintaining real-time situational awareness during the Marka e Haq. Pakistan Air Force (PAF) delivered a strong response in the aerial domain, effectively countering threats through timely action and operational readiness. The documentary highlighted that the Pakistan Navy's advanced submarines and weapon systems prevented any maritime advancement by the adversary in the region. During the operation, a fully integrated command-and-control system ensured swift and effective communication among the three services, enabling coordinated responses. The documentary also underscored the role of cyber, space, information, and electronic warfare capabilities in disrupting opposing communication networks. Close alignment between diplomatic and military efforts played a key role in shaping Pakistan's overall strategic approach during the operation.—APP

## IRSA releases 147,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 147,600 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 114,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1457.36 feet which was 57.36 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 38,700 cusecs and 70,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1161.25 feet, which was 111.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 31,700 cusecs and 34,000 cusecs respectively.—APP

## Prisoners treated strictly under jail rules: Dr. Tariq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, on Friday said that prisoners in jails are treated strictly in accordance with established prison rules. Responding to a point of order in the Senate, he said judicial custody operates under a separate legal framework and is not subject to external influence. He added that all inmates are provided medical facilities in line with jail regulations. The minister explained that medical emergencies are addressed immediately, regardless of the time of day, stating that urgent cases cannot be delayed and are handled as soon as they arise. "If any prisoner requires urgent medical care, jail authorities are obligated to respond without delay," he said. Rejecting concerns regarding the timing or intent

behind prisoner transfers or treatment decisions, he said such actions are carried out strictly under legal procedures. He further said that jail authorities maintain proper records of all procedures, including medical reports and facility provisions, which are subject to official scrutiny. Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary said prisoners are provided healthcare, food, and other basic facilities under standard operating procedures, with no compromise on their rights. He added that the government ensures all necessary arrangements within legal limits and that the prison system functions in accordance with established legal and administrative rules. He also cautioned against politicising matters related to judicial custody, stressing that all actions are taken strictly in line with the law and jail manuals.—APP

## China-Pak event held to celebrates 75 Years of diplomatic ties

"Friendship" in bold traditional script. Additionally, a cake-cutting ceremony was held, featuring a cake adorned with the flags of both nations and the number "75" to mark the anniversary

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a vibrant ceremony held here at the UNI International-China Pakistan Deep Love Cultural Exploration Center, dignitaries and guests gathered to commemorate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, two all-weather strategic partners. The event, organized jointly by the China State Construction Engineering Corp. (CSCEC) Pakistan Branch, UNI International, and the All Pakistan China Friendship Association, provided a platform to reflect on decades of diplomatic achievements, foster cultural understanding, and reaffirm the enduring friendship between the two nations. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, on the occasion, Chief Guest former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf shared

moving diplomatic stories regarding the evolution of China-Pakistan friendship, recalling historical moments of mutual support and solidarity. He spoke of how the relationship had weathered regional and global changes, emerging stronger with each passing decade, and urged the younger generation to carry forward this legacy of trust and cooperation. A core segment of the event focused on the tangible successes of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and broader infrastructure development under bilateral cooperation. The CSCEC Pakistan team highlighted several landmark projects completed over the past two decades that have transformed Pakistan's infrastructure landscape. These included the PKM Motorway (Sukkur-Multan section), the Islamabad International Airport and the Centaurus project. Adding a cultural dimension to the proceed-

ings, thirty teachers and students from the Apex Education System participated in an immersive experience of Chinese intangible cultural heritage—traditional paper cutting. Led by Principal Fahad Ahmed Khan, the group learned the delicate art under the expert guidance of Madam Xi Hui from UNI International. With meticulous precision, the students wielded scissors to create intricate designs symbolizing friendship, peace and shared prosperity. The session also included a demonstration of Chinese calligraphy, further enriching the cultural exchange. The event culminated in an unveiling ceremony for a Chinese calligraphy plaque inscribed with the words "Long Live China-Pakistan Friendship" in bold traditional script. Additionally, a cake-cutting ceremony was held, featuring a cake adorned with the flags of both nations and the number "75" to mark the anniversary.

# MONAL

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Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

## Stay Strong in Patriotic Spirit

By MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL



FROM the earliest days of our schooling, when the world seemed both vast and simple, the pages of our history textbooks carried us back to the fateful events of September 6, 1965. There, in measured words and stirring accounts, we learned how a cowardly enemy launched a surprise attack upon Pakistan under the veil of darkness, violating every code of honourable warfare. The memory of that

night, when aggression came without declaration or decency, has never left the national consciousness. We heard again and again the resolute address of President Ayub Khan to the nation, his words ringing with gravity and unyielding determination, preserved still in the quiet chambers of our minds like a sacred recording from the past.

Yet among all the tales of that war, none moved us more deeply than the story of Major Aziz Bhatti. His courage in the face of overwhelming odds, his selfless defence of his post, and his ultimate martyrdom stirred something profound in young hearts. Even today, the mere mention of his name brings a mist to the eyes; one feels the dam of emotion give way, and tears flow unbidden in tribute to a hero who gave everything so that the rest of us might stand secure. Such sacrifices are not mere chapters in a book; they become part of the moral air we breathe, shaping the character of a people.

In those school years, September 6 was always observed as a public holiday, a day set apart for reflection and remembrance. Special ceremonies were held in every school and college across the land. Flags fluttered at half-mast before rising proudly, anthems echoed through assembly halls, and teachers recounted the events with voices thick with pride and sorrow. We listened spellbound to stories of valour on the battlefield, of ordinary soldiers performing extraordinary deeds, and of a nation that refused to bow before superior numbers. I remember sitting there as a boy, wishing with all my heart that I could have been an eyewitness to those stirring days. How I longed to walk the same ground where heroes had trod, to see with my own eyes



the scenes my elders and teachers described with such vivid passion. Those classroom lessons and fireside tales from grandparents and uncles instilled in me, and in countless others of my generation, an abiding spirit of courage and sacrifice. They taught us that freedom is never free, that vigilance is the eternal price of sovereignty, and that a nation's true strength lies not only in its arms but in the resolve of its people. My breath itself seemed to carry the rhythm of that old defiance, and the blood warmed in my veins whenever the date was mentioned.

Sixty years later, in May 2025, I found myself transported back to that same schoolboy's fervour. Once again, Pakistan dusted off its eternal vision and responded with clarity and strength to long-standing threats. The success of those days was not merely strategic; it was spiritual. It recharged the batteries of national passion and reminded us all of what we are capable of when united in purpose. In that moment, the decades melted away. I stood again as the eager child who had once absorbed every word about 1965, heart pounding with the same sense of duty and possibility. The old stories had come alive in the present, proving that the flame kindled long ago had never truly gone out.

It is my earnest hope that this sacred series of remembrance and resolve will continue unbroken from generation to generation. Our society, like any other, carries its share of controversies and internal debates. Differences of opinion, political or otherwise, are natural and often vigorous among us. Yet when the spectre of Indian aggression rises, all such divisions fade into insignificance. On this fundamental question—the defence of our motherland and the necessity of a firm, dignified response—we stand shoulder to shoulder, united as one indivisible whole. The events of May 2025 have breathed fresh life into our youth, awakening in them the same fire that once stirred their fathers and grandfathers. They have seen, not in faded textbooks but in the living drama of their own time, what it means to answer provocation with courage and to meet challenge with national solidarity. This continuity of spirit remains our greatest treasure. It transcends the passing noise of politics and the fractures of daily life, drawing its strength from the soil watered by the blood of heroes like Major Aziz Bhatti. As long as each new generation hears these stories and feels their pulse quicken with pride, Pakistan shall continue to stand tall, its vision clear, its defences firm, and its will unbroken. The schoolboy of yesterday now walks beside the young men and women of today, both gazing toward the same horizon of honour, resilience, and enduring national dignity. In their shared fervour lies the surest guarantee that the legacy will not only survive but flourish for ages yet to come.

## Iran Shattered the Dream of Greater Israel

Qamar Bashir



Yet the opposite occurred. Most Middle Eastern states avoided direct participation in the war. Rather than joining a regional offensive against Iran, Gulf countries emphasized diplomacy, negotiation, coexistence, and regional stability. Their leaders repeatedly signaled that they understood how to manage relations with Iran through political engagement, religious ties, and pragmatic diplomacy rather than total confrontation. More importantly, Iran's military and strategic resilience has now altered the balance of power in the region. Instead of being weakened into submission, Iran has emerged as what many...

AT the beginning of the Iran war, many observers believed that the greatest beneficiary would ultimately be Israel. The war was projected as the final chapter in a long strategic campaign to neutralize Iran, dismantle its regional influence, and reshape the Middle East under a new geopolitical order favorable to Tel Aviv and Washington. Israeli intelligence circles, supported by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and their allies in Washington, appeared convinced that the Iranian state was fragile, internally collapsing, economically exhausted, and politically isolated. According to that narrative, all that Iran needed was one decisive kinetic push from the United States and Israel for the entire regime to collapse like a house of cards. The assumption was that once Tehran fell, a pro-Western puppet regime would emerge, Iranian resources would come under indirect American-Israeli influence, and the strategic dream of uncontested Israeli dominance in the Middle East would finally become reality. This was not merely about defeating Iran militarily; it was about transforming the entire political map of the region. But history often humiliates those who confuse ambition with reality. Instead of collapsing, Iran resisted. Instead of surrendering, it retaliated. Instead of fragmenting, it unified. And in doing so, it may have fundamentally damaged Israel's long-term strategic position more severely than any battlefield loss. The first and perhaps most devastating consequence for Israel has been the erosion of its unquestioned political influence inside the United States. For decades, support for Israel in Washington operated almost as an untouchable doctrine. Congressional appropriations for Israel passed without scrutiny. Military aid flowed uninterrupted. Politicians from both parties competed to prove their loyalty to Israeli security interests. Criticizing Israel was politically dangerous, and opposing Israeli military actions was often portrayed as unpatriotic. But the Iran war changed the atmosphere dramatically. For the first time in years, large segments of the American public, independent journalists, political commentators, and even lawmakers began openly questioning whether the United States had entered the conflict to defend America or merely to protect Israeli strategic ambitions. Earlier congressional efforts to restrict presidential authority for war against Iran had failed overwhelmingly. Yet when a similar bipartisan initiative reappeared later, it was defeated by only a single vote. That shift was historically significant. It demonstrated that many lawmakers who once unquestioningly aligned with Israeli demands were now beginning to recognize the political cost of appearing subordinate to foreign strategic interests. The second major failure for Israel was strategic miscalculation. Iran absorbed the initial attacks, maintained

command cohesion, preserved national unity, and launched retaliatory strikes that shocked both Israel and the United States. Instead of showcasing Israeli supremacy, the war exposed vulnerabilities. Iranian missile and drone operations damaged sensitive Israeli infrastructure and demonstrated that Israel could no longer operate with total impunity. The myth of invulnerability was shattered. When the United States entered directly to support Israel, American bases themselves became targets, expanding the conflict beyond Israel's borders and increasing the risks for Washington.

The broader geopolitical consequences may prove even more damaging for Israel. One of the hidden strategic goals behind pressure on Iran was to accelerate normalization between Israel and major Sunni Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia. Israeli strategists believed that weakening Iran would frighten Gulf monarchies into deeper dependence on Israeli military and intelligence cooperation. Once Saudi Arabia fully normalized relations with Israel, Tel Aviv hoped to cement its hegemony across the Middle East. Yet the opposite occurred. Most Middle Eastern states avoided direct participation in the war. Rather than joining a regional offensive against Iran, Gulf countries emphasized diplomacy, negotiation, coexistence, and regional stability. Their leaders repeatedly signaled that they understood how to manage relations with Iran through political engagement, religious ties, and pragmatic diplomacy rather than total confrontation. More importantly, Iran's military and strategic resilience has now altered the balance of power in the region. Instead of being weakened into submission, Iran has emerged as what many analysts increasingly describe as the new strategic sheriff of the Middle East. Its demonstrated offensive and defensive capabilities have created a new deterrence equation. For decades, Israel relied on the doctrine of absolute military superiority and total impunity. That doctrine has now been challenged openly and visibly. With Iran's strategic credibility strengthened, its allied movements and ideological partners across the region are also expected to gain renewed confidence and momentum. Hamas, Hezbollah, and other Iran-aligned groups are likely to receive a psychological and political boost from Tehran's survival and resistance. The perception that Iran successfully stood against both Israel and the United States will energize many of its supporters throughout the region. At the same time, the broader influence of Shiite political and religious movements may expand significantly across the Middle East. This could gradually reshape the religious and political balance of power in the region. Ironically, the very war designed to establish "Greater Israel" may now accelerate the opposite outcome.

Instead of expanding Israeli influence from the Euphrates to the Nile, the conflict has exposed the limits of Israeli and American power. The dream of uncontested territorial and military expansion has collided with the reality of regional resistance and shifting geopolitical dynamics. As a consequence, the future may increasingly move not toward a greater Israel, but toward an Israel forced back within more internationally recognized and defensible boundaries. Equally significant is the perception that the United States itself no longer possesses unlimited willingness or capacity to impose Israeli strategic objectives across the region. The costs of war, domestic political backlash, economic strain, and military overstretch have all weakened Washington's appetite for open-ended confrontation. That realization alone changes the calculations of every regional power.

Perhaps most importantly, the war transformed global narratives surrounding Israel itself. Around the world, criticism of Israeli policies intensified dramatically. Independent media, social platforms, academics, and even former Western officials increasingly challenged long-standing assumptions about Israeli exceptionalism and impunity. Questions once considered taboo entered mainstream political discourse: Was Israel manipulating American foreign policy? Were American soldiers and taxpayers paying the price for another nation's ambitions? Had exaggerated intelligence assessments pushed Washington into unnecessary confrontation? These questions would have been politically unthinkable only a few years ago. Today, they dominate public debate across many societies.

In the end, the greatest lesson of the Iran war may be that military superiority alone cannot guarantee geopolitical victory. Nations endure through legitimacy, resilience, diplomacy, and the ability to command genuine trust among allies and populations. Israel entered the conflict hoping to reshape the Middle East in its favor. Instead, it may have triggered a historic reassessment of its role in the region and its relationship with the United States itself. The war that was meant to establish permanent Israeli dominance instead exposed strategic overreach, weakened political consensus in Washington, strengthened Iran's regional standing, and revived resistance movements across the Middle East. Far from inaugurating a new age of "Greater Israel," the conflict may ultimately be remembered as the moment when the limits of Israeli power were finally exposed before the entire world.

—Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)  
 Former Press Minister,  
 Embassy of Pakistan to France  
 Former Press Attaché to Malaysia  
 Former MD, SRBC  
 Macomb, Michigan

## Maryam Nawaz, Reform and the Utilitarian State

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Yet Bentham's calculus also asks governments to weigh costs. Every policy has side effects. A subsidy poorly targeted may waste public money. A welfare scheme designed for headlines rather than institutional sustainability may create temporary satisfaction but long-term fiscal strain. Punjab's ambitious spending priorities have drawn attention because...

THE English philosopher Jeremy Bentham argued that governments should be judged not by slogans or ceremony, but by the extent to which they promote "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." His famous hedonic calculus was an attempt to measure pleasure and pain through factors such as intensity, duration, certainty, nearness, extent and consequences. Though conceived in the 18th century, the idea still offers a useful lens through which modern governance can be examined. In Punjab today, where Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched a range of reforms, Bentham's framework invites a timely question: do these policies increase public welfare while preserving liberty and rights?

Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province, has long suffered from bureaucratic inertia, weak service delivery and growing public frustration. Successive administrations promised change, yet governance often remained hostage to red tape. Since taking office in 2024, Maryam Nawaz Sharif has sought to project a more interventionist and welfare-oriented model. Her government has introduced housing programmes, youth schemes, transport expansion, digitalisation drives and regulatory authorities. Whether one supports or opposes the politics behind them, these measures deserve assessment on outcomes rather than rhetoric. From a Benthamite perspective, social welfare schemes carry obvious utility. Programmes such as Apni Chhat Apna Ghar aim to expand affordable housing, while scholarships, laptops and youth internships seek to widen opportunity. If a poor household gains shelter, a student gains access to digital tools, or an unemployed graduate secures training, the pleasure generated is not merely private it radiates into families and communities. Bentham would likely classify such measures as high in intensity, duration and extent, because benefits can be both immediate and long-lasting. Similarly, the province's investment in transport and citizen facilitation may

be read through utilitarian logic. New buses, road rehabilitation, mobile health clinics and digital service centres can reduce everyday suffering: fewer delays, easier mobility, quicker access to healthcare, and less humiliation in dealing with officialdom. Governance often fails not in grand theory but in ordinary inconvenience. Bentham understood this well. Removing avoidable pain from daily life is itself a moral gain. Yet Bentham's calculus also asks governments to weigh costs. Every policy has side effects. A subsidy poorly targeted may waste public money. A welfare scheme designed for headlines rather than institutional sustainability may create temporary satisfaction but long-term fiscal strain. Punjab's ambitious spending priorities have drawn attention because development allocations and sectoral budgets have risen sharply. If such spending builds durable capacity, the utility case is strong. If it expands debt or weakens finances, the pleasure may be short-lived. The sharper test lies in legal and institutional reform. Maryam Nawaz's administration has promoted the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA), aimed at tackling hoarding, profiteering and encroachments. On paper, this appears Benthamite: inflation and market disorder impose pain on millions, so stronger enforcement may benefit the wider public. But utilitarianism is not a blank cheque for state power. Bentham supported codified law and administrative efficiency, yet arbitrary authority can itself become a source of suffering. If enforcement agencies act transparently, proportionately and under judicial oversight, utility rises. If powers are abused, fear replaces trust. The same dilemma appears in policing reforms. Public demand for safer streets is genuine, and crime control yields collective benefit. But liberty cannot be collateral damage. Reports surrounding tougher policing structures, including the Crime Control Department, have raised concerns among rights advocates. Here Bentham meets modern constitutionalism: security matters, but unchecked coercion can inflict pain more severe than the disorder it

claims to cure. Effective governance must protect citizens from both criminals and excessive state force. This brings us to individual rights. Bentham famously criticised the abstract language of "natural rights," yet contemporary democracies have refined the debate. Rights today are practical guarantees against arbitrary detention, censorship, discrimination and abuse. In a province as politically vibrant as Punjab, liberty means the citizen's ability to criticise power, seek justice and live without official intimidation. No utilitarian success in roads or subsidies can fully compensate for the erosion of these freedoms. Happiness without dignity is an incomplete metric.

To Maryam Nawaz's credit, her administration has also highlighted inclusion from minority welfare initiatives to disability support and women-focused programmes. Such measures align with a more modern utilitarianism that counts the welfare of marginalised citizens equally, not merely the majority. If sustained fairly and free from patronage, these can strengthen social cohesion and widen the moral reach of the state. Punjab's real challenge, however, is institutionalisation. Pakistan's politics too often personalises governance. Schemes are tied to personalities, not systems; announcements outpace execution; reforms depend on one officer rather than stable rules. Bentham would have warned against this. Good government is not episodic generosity but predictable administration under law. The public gains most when institutions outlast leaders. In the end, the verdict on Punjab under Maryam Nawaz Sharif cannot rest on partisan enthusiasm or reflexive criticism. Bentham's hedonic calculus asks harder questions: Are citizens safer? Are services easier to access? Are opportunities wider? Are rights secure? Is pain reduced for the many without injustice to the few? If the answer increasingly becomes yes, then Punjab may indeed be moving toward the greatest happiness principle. But if efficiency comes at the cost of liberty, or welfare at the expense of accountability, then the calculus turns against power itself. Governance, like philosophy, is judged not by promises but by consequences.

## Briefs

## US and Iran exchange fire, but Trump...

FROM PAGE 01  
Centcom said Iran had used missiles, drones and small boats in the attack, which targeted three Navy destroyers. The US said it targeted missile and drone sites and other locations in response. "Centcom does not seek escalation but remains positioned and ready to protect American forces," it said in a statement. Iran also said it would respond if attacked. "(The) US and its allies must know that Iran will respond forcefully and without the slightest hesitation to any act of aggression or attack," the military spokesperson said, according to state television. Iran's Press TV later reported that, following several hours of fire, "the situation on Iranian islands and coastal cities by the Strait of Hormuz is back to normal now". The two sides have occasionally exchanged gunfire since the ceasefire took effect on April 7.

## MPs challenge ambiguity...

FROM PAGE 01  
In a post on the social media platform X on Thursday, Castro said, "For nearly six decades, the US has voluntarily remained in the dark on Israel's nuclear capabilities. The ambiguity ends now. There is too much at stake to accept ignorance. We are at war alongside Israel against Iran without knowing what their red lines are for using a nuclear weapon," he said. The letter repeatedly questioned the US government's refusal to publicly acknowledge Israel's alleged nuclear arsenal, while noting that multiple nuclear-armed states are directly involved in or affected by the conflict. "The risks of miscalculation, escalation, and nuclear use in this environment are not theoretical," the lawmakers warned, adding that Congress had a "constitutional responsibility to be fully informed about the nuclear balance in the Middle East".

## IMF approves 1.2 billion...

FROM PAGE 01  
previously under-taxed sectors, including retail and agriculture. Authorities are also expected to pursue additional revenue measures to support a tax-to-GDP increase over the medium term. Energy sector reforms remain central to the IMF framework, with commitments to regular and predictable tariff adjustments in electricity and gas to reduce circular debt and improve financial viability in the sector. The programme also envisages continued restructuring and privatisation efforts involving selected state-owned enterprises, aimed at reducing fiscal burdens and improving efficiency. Officials said the latest review is expected to help support Pakistan's external position, with inflows contributing to a further strengthening of foreign exchange reserves in the coming weeks.

## Iran establishes Persian...

FROM PAGE 01  
This development comes amid heightened tensions in the region. Iran has effectively controlled or disrupted traffic in the strait since late February 2026, contributing to spikes in global energy prices. Seized Tanker Redirection in a related incident, Iranian forces seized and redirected the US-sanctioned oil tanker Ocean Koi back to Iran's southern shores. The Iranian navy described the operation in the Sea of Oman as targeting a vessel accused of attempting to "damage and disrupt Iran's oil exports." State television aired footage of forces boarding the ship. "Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi sharply criticized the US, stating that American military actions tend to occur 'every time a diplomatic solution is on the table.'"

## Envoy highlight Pakistan, Canada business opportunities

Around 80 guests including Hon'ble Senators, Hon'ble Members of House of Commons, other Canadian dignitaries, representatives of diplomatic corps, Pakistani community and local media attended the special event

DNA

OTTAWA: The High Commission participated in the "Pakistan" event organized by Hon. Senator Salma Attaullahjan in the Senators Chamber, Senate of Canada building, in Ottawa on May 6, 2026 as part of the month-long "Asian Heritage Month" celebrations in Canada. Around 80 guests including Hon'ble Senators, Hon'ble Members of House of Commons, other Canadian dignitaries, representatives of diplomatic corps, Pakistani community and local media attended the special event. The High Commission presented publicity material and video-clip highlighting Pakistan's rich cultural heritage, art, tourism, adventure sports and cuisine. High Commissioner Muhammad Saleem extended gratitude to Hon. Senator Salma Attaullahjan for organizing the "Pakistan" event in the most prestigious premises of the Senate of Canada. He sought inter-parliamentary exchanges between the bicameral Parliaments of Pakistan and Canada through the existing Parliamentary Friendship Groups. He also highlighted the immense opportunities for increasing Pakistan-Canada economic, trade, investment and tourism ties for mutual benefit.



## Bahrain and US circulate Security Council resolution

UNITED NATIONS : Bahrain and the United States have distributed a draft Security Council resolution calling for Iran to cease attacks in the Strait of Hormuz, according to the ambassadors of the two countries. The text is supported by Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), whose representatives also took part in the media stake-out. Iran dismisses the draft as "one-sided." But there were no indications as to when the draft resolution would be brought to a vote. The development comes a day after the UN Security Council met in closed session following Monday's missile and drone attacks on the UAE, which the Iranian military categorically denied carrying out. The Strait of Hormuz is critical not only to the stability and the prosperity of the Gulf region,

but also to the global economy, Bahraini Ambassador Jamal Fares Alrowaiee told reporters. "Recent developments have underscored the importance of keeping this strategic waterway safe, secure and fully open. They have also shown the need for collective action," he said. He explained that the Bahrain-US text builds on the "historic" Council resolution 2817 (2026). Adopted in March, it condemned the strongest terms "egregious attacks" by Iran against seven neighbouring countries. The draft resolution calls for Iran to immediately cease all attacks and threats against merchant and commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. It also addresses the placement of mines and illegal tolling in the critical maritime channel. "Allowing such action to become normalized is unacceptable. In addition, the draft addresses partic-

ipation in the United Nations efforts to establish a humanitarian corridor in the Strait," he added. US Ambassador Mike Waltz underscored that the freedom of navigation for the entire global economy is "what's at stake here - nothing less than a cornerstone of worldwide stability and commerce." He warned that "those who abuse it, or seek to throw it out, are setting a very, very dangerous precedent - and frankly setting the stage to doom global trade." Waltz said the draft resolution "requires Iran to do some very simple, straightforward things," however he noted Tehran's announcement earlier this week of the Persian Gulf Straits Authority which requires international ship captains to pay a toll when transiting the waterway. "So that doesn't just affect this region. It affects the entire world," he said. Later, Iran's Ambassador

Amir Saeid Iravani told reporters at the stakeout that the draft resolution was "deeply flawed, and one-sided". "They claim that their actions are intended to protect freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and made some baseless allegations against my country. The facts on the ground prove otherwise," he said. He said Washington's actions contradicted the administration's stated objectives "and have served only to escalate tensions and deepen instability in the region." He added that the only solution to the Hormuz crisis was a permanent end to the war and lifting of the US maritime blockade. The Strait of Hormuz, located off the coast of southern Iran, is a key transit route for about a quarter of global seaborne oil trade and significant volumes of liquefied natural gas as well as fertilizers. - APP

## Navy Seeks Postponement of Athletics Championship Over Heatwave

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy has formally urged the Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) to postpone the 54th National Athletics Championship 2026, citing extreme heatwave conditions and serious health risks to athletes, officials and support staff in Karachi. According to an official letter sent to the AFP Secretary, the championship is scheduled to take place in Karachi from May 14 to 17, during which the Pakistan Meteorological Department has forecast temperatures soaring up to 47°C, with humidity levels reaching nearly 80 percent. The letter warned that the combination of extreme heat and humidity could create "life-threatening conditions" for athletes participating in high-intensity outdoor events. Pakistan Navy stated that, due to the ongoing heatwave, it has already suspended all physical and combat training activities in Karachi to avoid heat-related illnesses. The communication further highlighted international medical research and World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, stating that prolonged exposure to temperatures above 40°C during strenuous physical activity can lead to severe dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke, electrolyte imbalance, organ failure and even death in extreme cases. Pakistan Navy also referred to previous global heatwave incidents in which athletes and civilians suffered serious medical emergencies and fatalities due to extreme weather conditions. In the letter, the Navy strongly called for an immediate reconsideration of the event schedule and urged the federation to prioritize athlete welfare and safety over competition timelines to prevent any untoward incident.

## Kelly a potential challenger to Trump

FROM PAGE 01

The case has taken on broader political significance in Washington, where Democrats are increasingly searching for figures capable of challenging Trump's headline political and security agenda. Kelly, 62, is a former US Navy combat pilot who flew missions during the 1991 Gulf War before joining Nasa as an astronaut. He later commanded multiple space shuttle missions, including the final flight of Space Shuttle Endeavour in 2011.

## 'No forced deportations of...

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nationals, having fulfilled host country visa and work based requirements continue to visit / access work visas in UAE and other friendly countries without prejudice. Fake news being peddled to the contrary along with social media posts is malicious and fabricated with a purpose to serve ulterior motives. Any issue or access with any Pakistani national is always taken up on case to case basis with the concerned country through established foreign office channels. Government of Pakistan PTV News Associated Press of Pakistan Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Pakistan Mohsin Naqvi.

## Pakistan coordinating with...

FROM PAGE 01

the repatriation of the seafarers. He appreciated the "cooperation and support" being extended by Singapore in this regard. DPM Dar said that he also discussed the matter with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi during a phone call, with both sides maintaining close coordination. He added that Pakistan stood ready to facilitate the safe repatriation of Iranian nationals to Iran via Pakistani territory.

## High profile terrorist killed in KP

FROM PAGE 01

planning various militant operations, the security sources elaborated. Security sources said that Fatehullah was killed along with his accomplices during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted near Bannu's Baka Khel Airport on April 9. During the operation, security forces effectively targeted militant hideouts and neutralised the terrorists. The security sources maintained that the revelations regarding Fatehullah's Afghan background had raised serious questions over repeated claims by the Afghan Taliban government that their soil would not be allowed to be used against any other country, particularly Pakistan. Such evidence strengthens concerns regarding cross-border terrorist networks in Afghanistan and regional militant connections, acting against Pakistan, the security sources added.

## Pentagon releases secret files

FROM PAGE 01

the War Department, which officially refers to UFOs as "Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena," or UAPs. An image showing an Unidentified Anomalous Phenomenon, or UAP, released by the Pentagon on May 8, 2026. - Photo courtesy US Department of War One file - from December 1947 - contains a series of reports on "flying discs." An Air Force intelligence report - marked "top secret" - from November of the following year features information on reported sightings of "unidentified aircraft" and "flying saucers." Another file documents a 2023 incident in which three teams of federal law enforcement special agents independently described "seeing orange 'orbs' in the sky emit/launch smaller red 'orbs'".

## Turkish police detain over 19 on corruption charges

The suspects are accused of manipulating public tenders through a municipal subsidiary

ISTANBUL: Turkish police on Friday detained 29 people as part of an investigation into corruption allegations at Istanbul's opposition-run municipality, state media reported. Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu - a key rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan - has been imprisoned for over a year and is accused of running a large criminal network. Imamoglu is currently on trial alongside 413 co-defendants. If convicted, he risks 2,430 years in prison. Authorities have launched an investigation into the "activities of a criminal organization established under the leadership of Ekrem Imamoglu," the state-run Anadolu news agency reported, citing a statement from the Istanbul chief prosecutor's office. Prosecutors issued arrest warrants for 30 suspects. Twenty-nine were detained, while one remains abroad, the report said. The suspects are accused of manipulating public tenders through a municipal subsidiary. Imamoglu and his supporters accuse the Turkish government of doing everything to prevent him challenging Erdogan in the next presidential election, scheduled for 2028. - APP

## Al-Nassr survive Al-Shabab fightback to maintain SPL lead

RIYADH: Al-Nassr's march toward their first Saudi Pro League title since 2019 continued on Thursday with a hard-fought 4-2 away victory over Al-Shabab. For the latest updates, follow us @ArabNewsSport Joao Felix was the hero of the game with a hat-trick, but Cristiano Ronaldo also had a big night as he reached the milestone of 100 goals in the Saudi Pro League. It was a much-needed victory for Al-Nassr, who were left reeling by a 3-1 defeat by Al-Qadsiah on Sunday that reduced their lead over second-place Al-Hilal to just two points. The night began with a Felix masterclass, as the Portuguese forward had two goals to his name inside the opening 10 minutes. The first came in the third minute when a Sadio Mane cross was poorly dealt with by the defense, allowing Felix to take advantage and finish clinically past Marcelo Grohe. Seven minutes later, a curling cross from Abdulrahman Ghareeb toward the far post found Felix and he headed home his second. Ronaldo thought he had added to Al-Nassr's tally moments later but his effort was ruled out for offside. Then, in the 16th minute, Ghareeb was sent through on goal only for Grohe to produce a strong save. Soon after, the pressure from Al-Nassr began to ease as they sat deeper in an attempt to protect their lead. This would backfire somewhat, as it allowed Al-Shabab to grow

into the match. The first warning sign came when Hamam Al-Hammami gave Al-Nassr a scare as he hit the post in the 23rd minute. Yannick Carrasco eventually managed to capitalize on the shifting momentum on the half-hour mark. Abdullah Al-Khaibari lost possession under pressure from the Belgian winger, who drove past Abdulleh Al-Amri before putting the ball past Bento to pull one back. The pressure from the home side continued into second half, with Carrasco almost equalizing in the 50th minute with an acrobatic effort inside the box. - Agencies



## Zeeshan Naqvi Elected CFP President

PSB has issued a formal notification confirming the results, marking the successful conclusion of the electoral process conducted under national sports regulations

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Former Deputy Mayor of Islamabad Syed Zeeshan Ali Naqvi has been elected President of the Chess Federation of Pakistan (CFP) for the 2026-2030 term following the completion of the federation's official elections. The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has issued a formal notification confirming the results, marking the successful conclusion of the electoral process conducted under national sports regulations. According to the Election Commission notification, the elections were held in accordance with the Constitution of the Pakistan Sports Board 2022, Revised National Sports Policy 2005, National Sports Federations (Tenure) Rules 2025, Sports Election Regulations 2024, and the constitution of the federation. Syed Zeeshan Ali Naqvi has been elected President of the Chess Federation of Pakistan, while Raja Muhammad Gauhar Iqbal has been elected Secretary General. Muhammad Musawar Khan and Muhammad Wasif Nisar have been elected as Finance Secretary and Joint Secretary respectively. Other office-bearers include Anwar Saleem Kasi as Senior Vice President, and Agha Waseem Ahmad, Muhammad Nadeem Khaldi, and Inamullah Awan as Vice Presidents.



## Briefs

## Gold price declines by Rs 2,700 per tola

ISLAMABAD The prices of gold decreased in the local market on Friday, with 24 karat gold per tola falling by Rs 2,700 to settle at Rs 494,062 compared to Rs 496,762 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold declined by Rs 2,315 to Rs 423,578 from Rs 425,893, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went down by Rs 2,123 to Rs 388,293 against Rs 390,416. In the international market, the price of gold decreased by \$27 to \$4,717 per ounce from \$4,744. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs 80 to Rs 8,525 from Rs 8,445, while the price of 10 grams of silver also rose by Rs 68 to Rs 7,308 from Rs 7,240. The price of silver in the international market increased by \$0.80 to \$80.41 per ounce from \$79.61. —APP

## Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.70 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 278.71. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279.05 and Rs 279.80, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.52 and closed at Rs 327.39 from the previous day's close of Rs 327.91, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs 1.77, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 0.96 and closed at Rs 378.68 compared to the previous day's Rs 379.64. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham declined by 01 paisa to close at Rs 75.87, while the Saudi Riyal remained unchanged and closed at 74.30. —APP

## Indonesia, Turkiye to develop next-gen autonomous combat drones

JAKARTA: Indonesian and Turkish defense companies are teaming up to develop the next generation of Turkiye's Kizilelma autonomous combat aircraft, as a fresh deal makes Jakarta the first foreign buyer of the new fighter jets Indonesian defense firm Republikorp and Turkish drone maker Baykar signed the agreement on the sidelines of the SAHA 2026 Defence and Aerospace Exhibition in Istanbul this week. The deal aims to strengthen the operational development of the Kizilelma drones starting from 2028, and also covers technology transfer, training, strategic tech research and localized production and maintenance centers. "This collaboration is a continuation of the Joint Venture Agreement that began in 2025 for the local production of the Bayraktar TB3 and AKINCI in Indonesia. The partnership has now expanded to building a sustainable aerospace industry ecosystem and developing a next-generation UCAV (Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle)," Republikorp said in a statement. Under the 2025 deal, the two companies agreed to set up a drone factory in Indonesia. Baykar drones, particularly the unmanned aerial combat vehicle Bayraktar TB2, gained global prominence after they were used by Ukraine's military against Russian forces following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Indonesia's purchase of the 15-meter-long, stealthy and supersonic Kizilelma follows the first joint Indonesia-Turkiye foreign and defense ministers' meeting in January, when the two countries agreed to boost their defense ties, including through joint capacity-building and industrial cooperation. —APP

## Marka-e-Haq commemorated at Pakistan HC, London

Pakistan's Acting High Commissioner to the UK, Mr. Haseeb bin Aziz stated that this gathering pays highest tribute to Pakistan's heroic Armed Forces; our fearless soldiers, sailors, and airmen, who stood as an iron shield in defence of our sacred land



DNA

LONDON: The High Commission for Pakistan in London commemorated the 1st Anniversary of Marka-e-Haq at a ceremony held in London. The event was attended by British Parliamentarians, Pakistan-origin Councillors, businessmen, officers of the High Commission, media representatives and a large number of prominent members of Pakistani diaspora in UK. In his key-note address, Pakistan's Acting High Commissioner

to the UK, Mr. Haseeb bin Aziz stated that this gathering pays highest tribute to Pakistan's heroic Armed Forces; our fearless soldiers, sailors, and airmen, who stood as an iron shield in defence of our sacred land. With unmatched courage, unwavering resolve, and exemplary professionalism, the Armed Forces of Pakistan upheld the dignity and honour of the green and white flag. During Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos, their response was swift, decisive, and precise; demonstrating a level of operational excellence that earned

recognition across the world. He also appreciated the Pakistani diaspora in the United Kingdom, who stood as true Ambassadors of Pakistan by defending homeland with conviction, and demonstrating unwavering solidarity. Defence & Naval Adviser, Cdre. Jawad Khawaja SI(M) SBT, and Army & Air Adviser Col. Mohsin Waqar in their remarks stated that Pakistan's defense forces, in exemplary unison, thwarted nefarious designs of the enemy and protected the sovereignty of Pakistan. Minister (Press), Mr. Ali Nawaz Malik briefed

the audience about effective measures taken by the Pakistan High Commission in keeping British media informed during Marka-e-Haq and presenting Pakistan's firm & principled stance to counter false narrative propagated by India through media. Representatives of Pakistani Community in UK paid glowing tributes to the Armed Forces of Pakistan, political leadership and the entire nation who stood resolute and united during Marka-e-Haq. The gathering pledged that Marka-e-Haq will continue to unite the nation towards building a stronger and more resilient Pakistan.

## UAE reports drone, missile attack

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates' Ministry of Defense announced that the country's air defenses were "actively engaging" with a missile and drone attack early Friday as the shaky ceasefire in the Iran war came under renewed strain. The ministry advised residents not to approach, photograph or touch "any debris or fragments that have fallen as a result of successful air interceptions." The latest attack came amid growing regional tensions despite a ceasefire agreement between Iran and the United States that has largely held since April 8. Hours earlier, the US military said it had intercepted Iranian attacks on three Navy ships in the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday night and carried out strikes on Iranian military facilities linked to attacks on American forces. The US military said no ships were hit and stressed that it did not seek escalation but "remains positioned and ready to protect American forces." President Donald Trump told reporters in Washington that the ceasefire was still holding despite the latest violence. The UAE was heavily targeted during the first six weeks of the US-Israeli war with Iran, which began on Feb. 28 when Washington and Israel launched strikes against Iranian targets. Authorities in Abu Dhabi this week accused Tehran of resuming drone and missile attacks on UAE territory, with strikes reported on Monday and Tuesday marking the first such attacks since the April 8 ceasefire agreement. According to UAE officials, the country has faced more than 2,000 drones, hundreds of ballistic missiles and dozens of cruise missiles launched from Iran since the conflict began. While most were intercepted, the attacks killed at least 13 people, wounded more than 200 and damaged energy infrastructure and landmark buildings. Other Gulf Arab states have also faced repeated attacks during the conflict despite insisting they were not involved in the US-Israeli military campaign against Iran. On Thursday, the UAE announced the formation of a national committee tasked with documenting Iranian attacks and the resulting human, economic and material damage as part of preparations for possible legal action against Tehran. The committee, chaired by the UAE attorney general, will compile evidence of what officials described as "Iranian acts of aggression" and alleged international crimes committed against the UAE, its citizens, residents and visitors. —APP

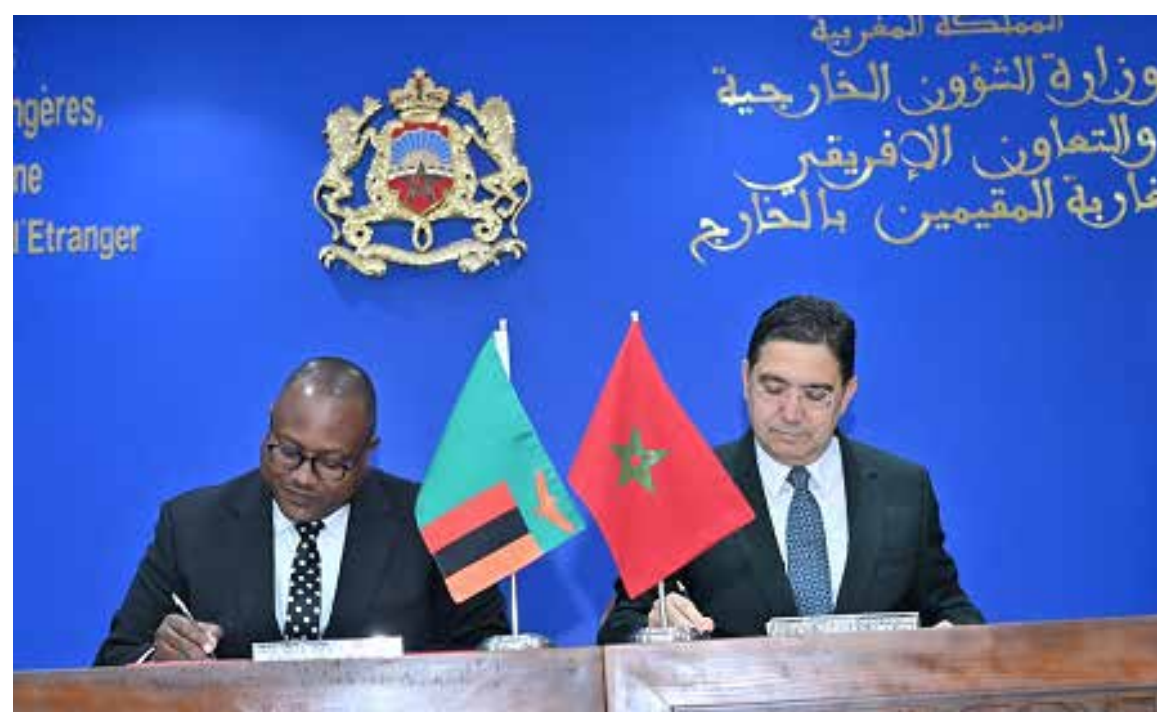
## Jam discusses tariff reforms

The Minister reaffirmed the Ministry of Commerce's commitment to continued consultations with the business community and industrial stakeholders to formulate practical, balanced, and sustainable trade policies aimed at enhancing exports, strengthening manufacturing, supporting SMEs, and improving Pakistan's long-term economic resilience

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a detailed meeting with representatives of the Pakistan Business Council and leading industrial stakeholders, including CEO of Gatron Industries Limited and Novatex Limited, Taimur Dawood, to discuss industrial competitiveness, tariff rationalization, export sustainability, and challenges facing Pakistan's manufacturing sector. During the meeting, participants discussed the broader impact of tariff reforms, anti-dumping duties, and the cost structure affecting local industries, particularly the petrochemical, plastics, polyester, and SME sectors, said a release issued here on Friday. Industrial representatives informed the Minister that while tariff rationalization and trade liberalization are important objectives, abrupt across-the-board duty reductions could adversely affect domestic manufacturing, government revenues, and industrial investment. They stressed the importance of distinguishing between genuine industrial exporters and trading activities that rely heavily on imports without contributing significantly to local value addition. Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan emphasized that Pakistan's industrial and export ecosystem must support long-term manufacturing growth and sustainable industrialization. He observed that emerging industries require time, infrastructure development, capital recovery, and policy stability before becoming globally competitive exporters. The Minister stated that policy decisions should remain responsive to changing economic realities and geopolitical developments. He noted that Pakistan's economic environment differs significantly from many regional competitors due to security challenges, energy costs, law-and-order concerns, and regional uncertainties, making direct comparisons with other economies difficult. Participants highlighted concerns regarding the informal economy and uneven enforcement mechanisms, noting that compliant industries often face unfair competition from undocumented commercial importers and unregulated sectors operating outside the tax and regulatory framework. Jam Kamal Khan stressed the importance of stronger enforcement mechanisms to ensure fair competition and protect registered industries contributing to the formal economy. He observed that sustainable industrial growth requires balanced policymaking, consistent implementation, and effective regulatory oversight. The meeting also discussed challenges faced by Pakistan's petrochemical and downstream chemical industries due to fluctuating global raw material prices, high production costs, and changing international market dynamics. Stakeholders particularly underlined the strategic importance of downstream industries, petrochemicals, PVC, plastics, and value-added manufacturing for Pakistan's future industrial growth and export diversification. Industrial representatives informed the Minister about ongoing and planned investments in Pakistan's manufacturing sector, including expansion projects involving international partners and foreign investors. They emphasized that stable industrial policies and supportive tariff structures are essential to encourage further investment and strengthen industrial self-reliance. Jam Kamal Khan observed that industrial development globally has historically been supported through phased protection and strategic industrial policies. Referring to examples from South Korea, China, Japan, and the United States, the Minister noted that strong domestic industries are built gradually through policy consistency, investment support, and market stabilization. The Minister reaffirmed the Ministry of Commerce's commitment to continued consultations with the business community and industrial stakeholders to formulate practical, balanced, and sustainable trade policies aimed at enhancing exports, strengthening manufacturing, supporting SMEs, and improving Pakistan's long-term economic resilience. —DNA

## Zambia reiterates support for Morocco's territorial integrity

SAHARA: The Republic of Zambia reiterated on Thursday its firm and steadfast stance in favor of the territorial integrity and Moroccanness of the Sahara. It also welcomed the historic adoption on October 31, 2025, by the UN Security Council of Resolution 2797, which enshrines, within the framework of Moroccan sovereignty, the autonomy plan proposed by the Kingdom of Morocco as the only serious, credible, and lasting basis for reaching a political solution to the artificial dispute over the Sahara. This stance was conveyed in a joint Communiqué issued in Rabat following talks between Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation, and Moroccan Expatriates Nasser Bourita and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Zambia Mulambo Haimbe, currently on a working visit to Morocco. Haimbe also expressed his country's support for the United Nations' efforts to reach a Solution to this regional dispute, as well as for the autonomy plan presented by the Kingdom of Morocco, deeming it the only credible, serious, and realistic solution for resolving this issue. He further emphasized that this initiative provides a pragmatic and constructive basis for reaching a lasting and mutually-acceptable political solution. For his part, Bourita welcomed the positive development of ties between the two brotherly countries in recent years, facilitated in particular by the opening, in October 2020, of the Zambian Embassy in Rabat and its Consulate General in Laayoune. —DNA



## More than half of Lebanon population depends on aid

BEIRUT: More than half of Lebanon's population depends on humanitarian aid, a European Union official said on Friday, as Israel continues its attacks on the country despite a ceasefire in the two-month-long war with militant group Hezbollah. "At present, more than three million people, meaning more than half of the population here in Lebanon, depend on humanitarian aid to survive," EU crisis management chief Hadja Lahbib told reporters after meeting Lebanese President Joseph Aoun in Beirut. Lahbib said that since the start of the war on March 2 the 27-member bloc has provided 100 million euros in aid and sent six planes carrying humanitarian aid, with a seventh expected on Saturday. Israeli strikes in Lebanon have killed more than 2,700 people and displaced over one million since early March, according to authorities. The UN launched an emergency appeal in March for \$308 million in humanitarian aid for Lebanon, but in two months it has raised just \$126 million, according to UN agencies. Lahbib, who said that the ceasefire has opened "a narrow window of hope", called for Hezbollah "to cease its attacks and be disarmed" and said that "Israel must put an end to its bombardments". "For a ceasefire to lead to peace, courage is needed - political courage to address the root causes of this conflict." Israel and Lebanon are set to hold a third round of talks in Washington next week to end the war, despite Hezbollah's opposition to direct negotiations. —APP

## Turkish police detain 29 over Istanbul municipality corruption probe

ISTANBUL: Turkish police on Friday detained 29 people as part of an investigation into corruption allegations at Istanbul's opposition-run municipality, state media reported. Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu - a key rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan - has been imprisoned for over a year and is accused of running a large criminal network. Imamoglu is currently on trial alongside 413 co-defendants. If convicted, he risks 2,430 years in prison. Authorities have launched an investigation into the "activities of a criminal organization established under the leadership of Ekrem Imamoglu," the state-run Anadolu news agency reported, citing a statement from the Istanbul chief prosecutor's office. Prosecutors issued arrest warrants for 30 suspects. Twenty-nine were detained, while one remains abroad, the report said. The suspects are accused of manipulating public tenders through a municipal subsidiary. Imamoglu and his supporters accuse the Turkish government of doing everything to prevent him challenging Erdogan in the next presidential election, scheduled for 2028. —APP

## Hantavirus outbreak risk to public 'absolutely low'

GENEVA: The World Health Organization said Friday the risk to the public of a deadly hantavirus strain in a cruise ship outbreak was minimal, as it spreads only through "very close contact." An outbreak on the MV Hondius, which is heading to the Spanish island of Tenerife, has sparked international concern. Three passengers from the ship have died, with the WHO saying Thursday there were five confirmed and three suspected cases in total. "This is a dangerous virus, but only to the person who's really infected, and the risk to the general population remains absolutely low," WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier told a press briefing in Geneva. He said that even people who had stayed in the same cabin as an infected person on the MV Hondius "don't seem to be both infected in some cases." —APP

