



Islamabad POST

Monday, May 12, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Pakistan IT exports set to touch new horizons, PM told

Detailed News On Page-08

Starmer pledges to continue his leadership fight

Detailed News On Page-08



Aurangzeb says tax reforms coming soon

Detailed News On Page-08



Macron says Iranian fears misplaced

Tehran warns Europe against 'hostile' moves

The warning comes as speculation grows about possible European involvement in maritime operations in the region, including potential warship deployments. Tehran described such actions as unethical and counterproductive

DNA

TEHRAN/BEIJING: Amid ongoing regional tensions following the US-Israeli conflict with Iran, Tehran has issued fresh warnings to European nations while expressing concern over the treatment of its citizens in the United Arab Emirates. China, meanwhile, has strongly opposed new US sanctions linked to Iran. Iran's Foreign Ministry urged European countries to "refrain from making any move that would undermine their interests," according to reports citing recent statements. The warning comes as speculation grows about possible European involvement in maritime operations in the region, including potential warship deployments. Tehran described such actions as unethical and counterproductive. In a related development, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baqaei stated that Tehran is closely monitoring the situation of Iranian citizens in the UAE. Baqaei said authorities are aware of reports that some Iranians were "harassed" in the Emirates over the past week. "We have handed down clear instructions to our embassies and consulates... and here we are closely monitoring the situation," he added, pledging to take all necessary actions to protect Iranian nationals. Separately, China has escalated its resistance to US sanctions targeting entities involved in Iranian oil trade.

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Briefs

Court accepts Maryam plea

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday allowed an application filed by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz seeking the return of Rs70 million deposited as surety for bail in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills case. The case by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) pertains to alleged money laundering and income beyond means via "dubious" business transactions of the Chaudhry Sugar Mills, of which Maryam was a major shareholder. At the outset of the hearing, a NAB deputy prosecutor submitted an affidavit to an LHC full bench about the withdrawal of its plea before the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) challenging directives for the closure of the Chaudhry Sugar Mills investigation against Maryam.

Hangu averts major sabotage attempt

PESHAWAR: A major tragedy was averted in Hangu after police successfully defused a 10-kilogram improvised explosive device (IED) planted on Samari Road within the limits of City Police Station. According to police on Monday, the lethal remote-controlled bomb was discovered and safely defused during a timely operation carried out by the Bomb Disposal Squad. District Police Officer (DPO) Hangu, Tariq Habib Khan, said the explosive device had apparently been planted with malicious intentions to carry out a terrorist act. He added that the swift response by the Bomb Disposal Squad helped save the area from a possible disaster. Following the incident, heavy police deployment reached the site, cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to trace those involved. - APP

Iran says made 'legitimate' demands

NEWS DESK / DNA

TEHRAN: Iran on Monday asserted that it made "legitimate" demands in its latest formal response to the United States' peace proposal, after US President Donald Trump rejected the reply as "totally unacceptable". Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said Tehran had called for an end to the war across the region, the lifting of the US blockade of Iranian ports, and the release of frozen assets abroad in its response. "We did not demand any concessions. The only thing we demanded was Iran's legitimate rights," said Baqaei in a weekly press briefing. He said Iran's demands included "an end to the war in the region", lifting the US blockade and "piracy", and the "release of assets belonging to the Iranian people, which have for years been unjustly trapped in foreign banks". "Safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz and establishing

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Till June 13

Pakistan extends austerity measures

The Cabinet Division issued a formal notification after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved the extension on the recommendations of the implementation committee. According to the notification, a 50% reduction in fuel supply for official vehicles will remain in place during the extended period

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday extended its austerity drive and fuel conservation measures until June 13 amid uncertainty over the Middle East conflict, as diplomatic talks between the United States and Iran remain deadlocked. Health and Wellness. The Cabinet Division issued a formal notification after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved the extension on the recommendations of the implementation committee. According to the notification, a 50% reduction in fuel supply for official vehicles will remain in place during the extended period. The government has also decided to keep 60% of official vehicles off the roads as part of the ongoing austerity measures. PM Shehbaz first introduced the austerity plan on March 9 in a televised address, days after the government hiked the prices of petrol and diesel by 20%.

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Pakistan summons Afghan envoy on Bannu attack

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Afghan Chargé d'Affaires was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deliver a strong demarche regarding the cowardly vehicle-borne IED attack carried out by terrorists of Fitna-al-Khawarij on the Fateh Khel Police Post in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu District on 9 May 2026. The attack resulted in the martyrdom of 15 police constables and injuries to four others, including a civilian. The Ministry conveyed that a detailed investigation into the incident, along

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Ishaq Dar, US envoy Natalie discuss bilateral relations

DPM/FM highlighted Pakistan's role in facilitating communication between US and Iran, while expressing hope that ongoing diplomatic efforts would contribute to peace and stability in the region and beyond



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Ms. Natalie A. Baker called on Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar @MishaqDar50 today to discuss the evolving regional situation and the broader Pakistan-U.S. bilateral re-

lationship. DPM/FM highlighted Pakistan's role in facilitating communication between US and Iran, while expressing hope that ongoing diplomatic efforts would contribute to peace and stability in the region and beyond. He also appreciated ongoing U.S. assistance in the repatriation of Pakistani and Iranian seafarers through Singapore. Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for the Middle East Conflict, Mr. Jean Arnault, called on DPM/FM Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. Mr. Arnault conveyed UN Secretary-General's deep appreciation for Pakistan's diplomatic efforts for regional peace and stability, and expressed UN's continued support in that regard. DPM/FM discussed latest regional developments with the Personal Envoy, and highlighted Pakistan's ongoing efforts and continued engagement with the parties. He also conveyed his deep gratitude to the UNSG for his invaluable contributions and consistent support for Pakistan over the years.

Indonesian Envoy calls on Pakistan Navy Chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Lt Gen (R) Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo, Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan, paid a courtesy call on Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) of the Pakistan Navy, at the Naval Headquarters in Islamabad. The meeting highlighted the strong and growing bilateral relations between Indonesia and Pakistan, particularly in the defence and maritime domains. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, including naval cooperation, maritime security, and opportunities to further strengthen defence ties between the two Muslim-majority nations. This high-level engagement underscores Pakistan's continued focus on enhancing strategic partnerships with key Indo-Pacific nations like Indonesia, which shares deep cultural, religious, and economic linkages with Pakistan. Pakistan and Indonesia have been exploring greater collaboration in areas such as joint military exercises, defence production, and maritime domain awareness in recent years.

China seeks 'more stability'

DNA

BEIJING: US President Donald Trump will visit China from May 13 to 15, Beijing confirmed on Monday, with the US leader expected to discuss Iran and trade with his Chinese counterpart. Washington and Beijing have been at loggerheads over key issues ranging from trade tariffs to the Middle East war and Taiwan, which China claims as part of its territory. Trump was originally meant to visit in late March or early April, but postponed his trip to focus on the war against Iran. "At the invitation of President Xi Jinping, President of the United States of America Donald J Trump will pay a state visit to China from May 13 to 15," a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said. Trump is expected to push Xi on Iran while aiming to ease trade tensions, according to US officials. China is a key customer for Iranian oil, mainly through independent "teapot" refineries that rely on discounted crude from the Islamic republic. "This will be a visit of tremendous symbolic significance," US Principal Deputy Press Secretary Anna Kelly told reporters on a call. "But of course, President Trump never travels for symbolism alone.

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ISLAMABAD: H.E. Lt Gen (R) Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo, Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan, paid a courtesy call on Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) of the Pakistan Navy. - DNA

Islamabad 'saved'

Plot to coerce girl into carrying out terrorist attack

The Balochistan CM said the girl perhaps did not know that Islamabad was the target and was to be told at the last minute, commending the intelligence agencies for foiling a major plan

DNA

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said on Monday that a plot to coerce a girl into carrying out a terrorist attack in Islamabad had been thwarted by intelligence agencies. The girl, who was reportedly arrested before she could carry out a suicide bombing, will be released to her father under supervision instead of facing trial, he said. The chief minister, in a press conference alongside the suspect, emphatically denounced the perpetrators of exploitation against Baloch women and girls. He stressed that their actions had no connection at all to Baloch tradition or history. "We are faithful to our tradition," he said, adding, "These people have no connection to Balochiyat, and the way they are using our women in this war is shameful. I am so ashamed that I cannot even tell the media the details." According to details shared by Bugti, the girl's name had initially appeared on social media as a missing person, but an investigation by intelligence agencies

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KP CM Afridi decries decisions

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Monday decried decisions taken behind closed doors, saying that the provincial government would oppose those decisions that went against peace in the province and the people's interests. He made the remarks during a visit to Bannu, after 15 police personnel were martyred and three sustained injuries after a suicide attack on the Fateh Khel police post. According to a statement issued by the CM House, Afridi met the families of the martyred police personnel and also offered Fateha. The statement said that he also visited the hospital to inquire about the health of the injured personnel and directed officials to provide them with the best possible healthcare facilities.

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NA resolution lauds role of armed forces

The NA commended the "bravery and operational excellence of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), which swiftly established air superiority

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Monday unanimously approved a resolution hailing the armed forces' "befitting response" to India's unprovoked military aggression during last year's May conflict. The conflict with India - starting from the April 22 Pahalgam attack to the end of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos with a ceasefire between the two countries on May 10 - has been dubbed "Marka-i-Haq" (Battle of Truth) by the state. Today, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar moved the resolution, which stated that the NA paid "rich tributes to the gallant armed forces of Pakistan". It noted that the armed forces, under the leadership and command of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of De-

fence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir, "launched Operation Bunyanum Marsoos on May 10, 2025, delivering a befitting response to this aggression". The NA deplored that in the "aftermath of the Pahalgam terrorist incident on April 22, 2025 in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, a malicious campaign was immediately orchestrated by the Indian government, and amplified by its state-sponsored media, to baselessly implicate Pakistan without any evidence or investigation, despite the fact that the incident was categorically condemned by the Government of Pakistan". The resolution condemned that despite PM Shehbaz's "sincere and generous offer" to participate in any neutral, transparent,

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Punjab CM okays uplift initiatives

The meeting appreciated the performance of the finance minister and finance secretary for the swift establishment of the Punjab General Insurance Company (PGIC), which was formally approved

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired the 34th meeting of the provincial cabinet, which approved a wide range of policy decisions, development initiatives, administrative reforms and public welfare programmes across multiple sectors, here on Monday. The cabinet paid glowing tribute on the first anniversary of Marka-e-Haq to Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, as well as the Air Chief and Naval Chief. It also commended the Chief Minister for the successful operations in the riverine Katcha areas. The meeting appreciated the performance of the finance minister and finance secretary for the swift establishment of the Punjab General Insurance Company (PGIC), which was formally approved. The cabinet approved the launch of the "Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar" scheme for residents of Cholistan and riverine areas on easy terms. It was informed that 30,000 plots had been identified under the programme, while around 200,000 families had already submitted applications. The Chief Minister directed strict digital monitoring of the scheme, ensuring citizens can access complete information "with one click". Key decisions included approval of summer vacations in schools from May 22

to August 24, expansion of Quaid-e-Azam Business Park Sheikhupura by 200 acres, implementation of axle load management system across Punjab, and lifting of the recruitment ban in the Punjab Mass Transit Authority. The cabinet also approved restructuring and capacity enhancement of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), upgradation of the UET sub-campus Narowal into a full-fledged engineering university, and establishment of the Punjab General Insurance Company. The meeting further approved inclusion of hill torrent (Rod Kohi) projects in Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan in ADP 2025-26, establishment of a Provincial Traffic Management and Command Centre, launch of the Chief Minister Stroke Management Programme, and placement of Data Darbar Hospital under the Auqaf Department. It also approved establishment of the Aquaculture Authority of Punjab and transfer of forest land for shrimp estates. Infrastructure and development proposals included additional funds for the Lala Musa-Maiwana road project, rehabilitation of roads in Sahiwal, Mianwali and Faisalabad, expansion of service roads from Gulshan Ravi to Babu Sabu, and Rs500 million development schemes in Sheikhupura. The Bank of Punjab was designated as financial agent for the Clean Air Programme. Relief measures included abolition of transfer fees for motorcycles up to 150cc, targeted fuel subsidies for motorcycle riders and Kisan Card holders, and enhanced benefits under the Chief

Minister Minority Card programme. Legislative and institutional reforms included approval of the Punjab Control of Ghunna and Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2025, amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997, establishment of Punjab Film City Authority Ordinance 2026, waste-to-energy projects on government land, and pilot groundwater recharge projects through borehole systems. The cabinet also approved urban bus operations under a rental model for free public transport, annual maintenance grants for 5,182 water filtration plants, recruitment relaxations in multiple departments, and establishment of additional courts in Hazro (Attock) and Kot Chhutta (Dera Ghazi Khan). Other major approvals included Punjab's New Energy Vehicle (NEV) Policy, engagement of Lahore Qalandars franchise for anti-smog awareness campaigns, merger of Punjab Forensic Science Agency into the Punjab Forensic Science Authority, establishment of friendship province relations with Zhejiang (China), and approval of appointments of vice chancellors, judges, chief executives and senior officials in various institutions. Addressing the cabinet, the CM directed officials to ensure swift issuance of NOCs and approvals for industrial projects, stating that "whoever wants to establish industry in Punjab will be fully supported." She stressed that industrialists should be facilitated in bringing investment plans and warned against unnecessary delays or bottlenecks in approvals.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan Dr. Irfan Neziro lu awarding prize to a winner of National Essay Writing Competition 2026 "On His (PBUH) Footsteps" organized by the Counselor Office for Religious Affairs under the auspices of the Türkiye Embassy at the embassy.

8 held in crackdown against drug dealers

GUJRAT: Police arrested eight suspects during a crackdown against drug dealers and illegal arms holders in Sarai Alamgir Circle and recovered more than six kilograms of hashish, liquor and a pistol, officials said on Monday. According to police sources, SHO City Sarai Alamgir police station Raheel Arif along with his team conducted raids at various locations and arrested three suspects. Police recovered 1,240 grams of hashish from Moazzam Bashir, 1,220 grams from Zeeshan Kifayat and 1,210 grams from Muhammad Asif. Meanwhile, SHO Sadr Sarai Alamgir Police Station Aftab Rasool Chauhan arrested three suspects during separate operations. Police recovered 1,200 grams of hashish from Muhammad Wajid, 10 liters of liquor from Qaiser Mehmood and five liters of liquor from Zain-ul-Abideen. In another operation, SHO Bolani police station Ghulam Rasool arrested two suspects. Police recovered 1,100 grams of hashish from Muhammad Faizan and a 30-bore pistol from Hasnain Feroze. Police said separate cases had been registered against the suspects while further investigation was underway.—APP

6.5kg ice drug recovered in multiple operations

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department has intensified its crackdown against narcotics trafficking across the province, conducting successful operations in Dera Ismail Khan, Peshawar and Abbottabad. During the operations, large quantities of narcotics were recovered and several suspects were arrested, while attempts to smuggle ice and hashish were effectively foiled. Cases have been registered and further investigations are underway. According to details received from the Excise Department, the Excise Bureau of Intelligence and Investigation D.I. Khan

Squad, acting on a tip-off, conducted an operation on Daraband Road and foiled an attempt to smuggle ice through female accomplices. During a search carried out by a lady constable, a total of 6,500 grams of ice was recovered from two women. The main accused, Aqib Khan son of Khanzada, a resident of Mardan, was arrested along with his female relatives allegedly involved in the smuggling attempt. Initial investigations revealed that the recovered narcotics were being smuggled to Islamabad and Lahore. A case has been registered at Excise Police Station D.I. Khan and further investigation is in progress.

In another operation, Excise Police Abbottabad recovered 2,438 grams of hashish near the Havelian Interchange and arrested two accused. A case has been registered at Excise Police Station Abbottabad and legal proceedings are underway. Meanwhile, the Excise Bureau of Intelligence and Investigation Peshawar conducted an operation on the Northern Bypass on the basis of secret information and recovered 48,000 grams of hashish from vehicle number BJJF-749. A case has been registered at Excise Police Station Peshawar and further investigation has been initiated.—APP

Abbasi, Qadir discuss legal affairs, railway reforms

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Law Irfan Qadir Monday called on Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi and discussed matters of mutual interest and various legal affairs. During the meeting, Irfan Qadir appreciated the recent reforms and public-friendly initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Railways under the leadership of Hanif Abbasi. The two leaders also exchanged views on the government's reform agenda and measures aimed at institutional improvement and administrative efficiency. They agreed to further accelerate efforts to provide better facilities and services to the public and to continue working towards strengthening governance and public welfare initiatives.—APP

Journalists protection govt's priority

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Monday said that protecting media workers remained the government's top priority. Speaking in the National Assembly on a point of order, he said both the federal and provincial governments are working round the clock to facilitate media channels and address their operational and financial issues to ensure their sustainability. He further said the matter would be taken up with the Pakistan Broadcasters Association to ensure that no employee loses their job. He stressed that the job security of media workers was a priority, along with improving their service structure and benefits. Attaullah Tarar said that arrangements regarding job security and improved service benefits for media workers would be finalised through consultations.—APP

Pakistan, Bangladesh enjoy deep rooted ties: Secy Auqaf

LAHORE: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta on Monday said the timeless message of Islam, rooted in peace, compassion, tolerance and spiritual enlightenment, served as a powerful bridge connecting the hearts of Muslim nations beyond geographical boundaries. Addressing a 12-member delegation of senior Bangladeshi civil service officers at Iqbal Hall, Badshahi Mosque, he said Pakistan and Bangladesh were bound together not only by shared history and faith but also by deep cultural, intellectual and spiritual affinities that continued to inspire mutual respect and brotherhood. Director General Religious Affairs Hafiz Anees ur Rehman, Additional Secretary Auqaf Department Nabeela Javaid and other officers of the Auqaf department were also present. Dr. Ehsan said the enduring bonds of faith, culture and spiritual heritage shared by Pakistan and Bangladesh continued to strengthen the spirit of

brotherhood and mutual understanding between the two nations. He added that such meaningful exchanges promoted harmony, intellectual cooperation and lasting people-to-people relations rooted in a common Islamic identity. He said the sacred shrines, mosques and spiritual institutions of Pakistan reflected the country's profound Islamic heritage, centuries-old traditions of religious harmony and unwavering commitment to peace, coexistence and humanity. He said Lahore had historically remained a centre of Islamic scholarship, Sufi teachings and intellectual enlightenment. Highlighting the Punjab government's Shrine Restoration and Development Programme under the Chief Minister Punjab Development Programme (2025-26 and 2026-27), Dr. Ehsan said 48 mosques and shrines were being restored and developed across the province. He said special focus was being given to Data Darbar with a development allocation of

approximately Rs 9.5 billion aimed at its uplift, facilitation of pilgrims and preservation of its spiritual heritage. The secretary said Punjab was blessed with the legacy of great Sufi saints and poets whose teachings continued to promote love, tolerance and harmony. He mentioned the shrines of Baba Farid Ganjshakar, Bulleh Shah, Waris Shah, Bibi Pak Daman and Mian Mir as enduring symbols of spiritual enlightenment and interfaith harmony. Dr. Ehsan said the visit of Bangladeshi delegation after more than five decades carried historic significance and reflected the growing desire for stronger institutional cooperation, administrative exchange and people-to-people contact between the two countries. He also thanked the Civil Services Academy for arranging the three-week training programme for the Bangladeshi delegation and facilitating their visit to the historic Badshahi Mosque.—DNA

Advance action against climate disaster discussed

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with international humanitarian and development partners, on Monday launched the second National Dialogue Platform on Anticipatory Action in Islamabad to strengthen Pakistan's disaster preparedness systems through forecast-based early action and coordinated climate resilience measures. The two day dialogue, being held at NDMA headquarters from May 11 to 12 under the National Coordination Forum on Anticipatory Action, has brought together around 200 participants from government institutions, UN agencies, humanitarian organizations, financial institutions, academia, climate experts, private sector representatives and community groups. The event is being organized jointly by NDMA, the World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Welthungerhilfe (WHH), Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Addressing the opening session, NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider stressed the need for trigger-based anticipatory actions and standardized disaster risk reduction mechanisms under the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (NDRRS) 2025-2030 to build a resilient disaster management regime in the country. He said anticipatory action must be activated in advance to minimize humanitarian and economic losses caused by climate induced hazards, adding that timely preparedness, effective early warning dissemination and coordinated institutional responses were essential to protecting vulnerable populations. The forum also marked the soft launch of Pakistan's National Anticipatory Action Strategy, aimed at establishing a comprehensive national framework for forecast based early action, institutional coordination and resilience building against disasters triggered by climate change. Representatives of partner organizations, including WFP Country Director Ms Coco Ushiyama, officials of the German Red Cross, PRCS, FAO Pakistan and Welthungerhilfe Pakistan, highlighted the importance of collaborative approaches to strengthen preparedness systems and reduce the impacts of humanitarian emergencies in the country. Participants noted that increasingly frequent climate-induced hazards such as floods, droughts, heatwaves and disease outbreaks had made anticipatory action a national priority, requiring stronger institutional coordination and sustainable financing mechanisms.—DNA

Call for rodent control operations amid Hantavirus concerns

Health experts stressed upon the need for coordinated efforts by municipal authorities, sanitation departments and public health institutions to launch an effective rodent control campaign alongside improved waste management systems

PESHAWAR: Public health experts have called for immediate resumption of anti-rat operations across the city following reports of a Hantavirus outbreak aboard a cruise ship allegedly linked to severe rodent infestation. They warned that the unchecked increase in rodent populations in densely populated urban areas could heighten the risk of transmission of dangerous zoonotic diseases, posing a serious threat to public health and sanitation. Health experts stressed upon the need for coordinated efforts by municipal authorities, sanitation departments and public health institutions to launch an effective rodent control campaign alongside improved waste management systems.

They also urged upon citizens to maintain cleanliness in homes, markets and public places, ensure proper garbage disposal and avoid conditions that attract rats and other disease-carrying pests. "Hantavirus disease is a rare but severe and often fatal, zoonotic infection primarily transmitted by rodents," said Prof. Dr. Yasar Mehmood Yousafzai of Khyber Medical University (KMU). He explained that the disease has two major forms, including Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS), which was mostly reported in western countries. In Asia, however, the infection could mainly affect the kidneys and blood vessels and could sometimes lead to kidney failure. Dr. Yasar said the

disease was contracted through inhalation of or contact with contaminated rodent saliva, urine or faeces. Early symptoms include fever, muscle aches and fatigue, which might later progress to respiratory or renal failure. "Rats and mice are commonly found in densely populated localities where their presence in kitchens, house entrances and even offices has become routine," he observed. He warned that the presence of rats in kitchens and food storage areas could pose a serious health hazard, as food items could become contaminated through rodent droppings and urine. Dr. Yasar emphasized that public awareness campaigns regarding preventive measures and symptoms associat-

ed with Hantavirus and other rodent-borne diseases were equally important to minimize health risks and ensure early diagnosis of infections. "Rats are already creating public health problems through bites and by spreading different diseases, which require proper research and diagnosis," said Muhammad Riaz Khan, Senior Veterinary Officer at the Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Khabar Pakhtunkhwa. Riaz said a young man from Bajaur was infected with leptospirosis last year, a zoonotic bacterial disease caused by Leptospira bacteria and transmitted to humans through contact with urine from infected animals, particularly rodents, dogs or livestock.—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 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
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Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
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Islamabad Metropolitan Water Tank

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: A multi-storey parking plaza, accommodate approximately 950 vehicles to support a new 800-metre car-free pedestrian zone, still waiting to operational.

DC reviews anti dengue, price control measures

The Deputy Commissioner was also briefed on steps taken against smoke-emitting vehicles as part of efforts to address environmental concerns. Magistrates informed the meeting about inspections and penalties imposed on vehicles found violating environmental standards

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration on Monday held a performance review meeting to assess the work of assistant commissioners and magistrates on key civic and enforcement matters. The meeting, chaired by the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, reviewed actions taken during the past week against beggars, profiteers, illegal encroachments and smoke-emitting vehicles. Officials informed the meeting that more than 350 beggars were shifted to lock-ups during operations carried out over the last seven days. Authorities also reported action against more than 200 shopkeepers and vendors for violating the government price list during the same period. The meeting focused on several administrative matters, including price control, court-related cases and other public service issues. Assistant commissioners and magistrates briefed the Deputy Commissioner on enforcement campaigns and field operations conducted across the federal capital. A detailed review

was carried out regarding the anti-begging campaign launched in different sectors of Islamabad. Officials shared figures related to arrests and detentions made during the drive. The administration said operations would continue in markets, public places and roadside areas to discourage professional begging activities. The meeting also reviewed measures against illegal encroachments in residential and commercial areas. Officials presented reports about the removal of illegal cabins and temporary structures installed outside houses and shops. The administration examined statistics regarding the campaign and discussed further action to clear public spaces. The Deputy Commissioner was also briefed on steps taken against smoke-emitting vehicles as part of efforts to address environmental concerns. Magistrates informed the meeting about inspections and penalties imposed on vehicles found violating environmental standards. Officials further discussed dengue preven-

tion activities being carried out in different parts of the city. Teams conducting inspections and awareness campaigns submitted updates regarding anti-dengue measures and monitoring arrangements. The administration also reviewed action against wedding halls for violating the one-dish rule. According to the briefing, several marriage halls faced sealing and heavy fines for failing to comply with official instructions related to serving food at wedding events. The meeting included a separate review of action against indoor shesha cafés operating in violation of rules. Authorities discussed inspections and enforcement steps carried out against such establishments in different sectors of the capital. Price control measures regarding roti and naan rates also came under discussion. Officials briefed the Deputy Commissioner about inspections conducted at tandoors and food outlets to ensure implementation of official prices. Authorities said monitoring

teams were checking complaints related to overcharging and weight violations. The district administration also reviewed implementation of its open-door policy aimed at improving public access to officials and addressing complaints without delay. The Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of public facilitation and directed officers to remain available for citizens seeking assistance on administrative matters. During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner directed all assistant commissioners to continue operations without discrimination and ensure equal implementation of laws across Islamabad. Officials were directed to maintain regular monitoring of markets, public places and commercial areas to improve enforcement and public service delivery. The administration said review meetings would continue to monitor the performance of field officers and evaluate progress on civic management and enforcement campaigns in the capital.—APP

Youth urged to dedicate skills for uplift

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday urged the youth to dedicate their education, skills and energies to national development, saying Pakistan had the potential to become a trillion-dollar economy by 2035 if the younger generation worked with commitment, vision and patriotism. Addressing the 26th Degree Awarding Ceremony of IQRA University Islamabad, the minister encouraged graduates to pursue their dreams with determination and play an active role in the country's economic and social progress. He paid tribute to the armed forces and said the nation had once again demonstrated its strength and resolve under the leadership of Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir during the

"Marka-e-Haq" on May 10, 2025. Highlighting the sacrifices rendered for the country, the minister paid tribute to the brave soldiers of Pakistan's armed forces who embraced martyrdom while defending the motherland. He also commended the courage, commitment and resilience of the martyrs' families, saying their spirit and patriotism strengthened the nation. Ahsan Iqbal urged the youth to place national interest above personal gains and work collectively for the country's progress. He told the graduates that every young Pakistani had the potential to achieve success and realize his or her dreams through dedication and perseverance. The minister said Pakistan was passing through a defining period in its history and stressed the need for national unity, discipline and economic advancement.

He urged students to dedicate their abilities and professional skills towards the country's development. "If we dedicate our capabilities, education and professional skills to Pakistan's development, there is no reason why the country cannot emerge as a trillion-dollar economy by 2035," he added. The minister also advised graduates to adopt a long-term vision for the country and prepare themselves for leadership roles in the future. Referring to the year 2047, when Pakistan will complete 100 years of independence, he said today's youth would shape the future of the country and carry forward the responsibility of national development. He urged students to remain optimistic, work hard and contribute towards building a strong, progressive and globally respected Pakistan.—APP

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension program for Tuesday in various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to an IESCO spokesperson, power supply in areas falling under Islamabad Circle would remain suspended from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. from Khana Dak, Burma, Waheedabad, Rehman Enclave, Khanna East, Khana-II/Qadeer Road, Al Noor Colony, Shareefabad, Ghouri Garden, Scheme-I, Gharial, I/8/4, I/8 Markaz, CCC-II and Fazaia feeders. Under Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, electricity supply would remain suspended from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in areas served by Pakistan Air Force, Rehmatabad-I, Chaklala, Takbeer-I, Takbeer-II, Takbeer-III and Kot Jabbi feeders. Similarly, under

Rawalpindi City Circle, power supply from Sector-IV and APHS feeders will remain suspended during the same timings. In Attock Circle, electricity supply would remain disrupted from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in areas connected with Attock Rural, Teen Mela and Bagh Nelab feeders. In Jhelum Circle, the affected feeders from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. include Shah Safeer, Karsal, Pind Mattay Khan, Sohawa Katchery, Main Bazar, Jand Mehlu, Karyala, Metro City, Grand City, Bolani and Co Muhammad Akram feeders. Likewise, in Chakwal Circle, Abdullah Pur, Jalal Pur, Sagharpur and CWO feeders would remain without electricity from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Under GSO Circle, electricity supply would remain suspended from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. from Gujjar Khan, Hayat Sir Road, Kanger Thathi, Islam Pura,

Dora Badhal, Thakra, ECM, Gulyana, RT Mill, Mandra, Mandra-2, Qazian, LTC, Hamad Jangi, KTM-2, Bhalote, Matwa, Kulia, Ward No-8, Kountrila, Bhai Khan, Karoli and Scheme-1 feeders. The spokesperson further said that power supply from 132-KV Chakwal-Bhagwal-Talagang and 132-KV Kahuta City-Palandri transmission lines would remain suspended from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, while maintenance work on Power Transformer T-3 at 132-KV GSS Rawalakot will cause outage from 6:00 am to 11:00 am. The IESCO management apologized to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work was completed ahead of time, the power supply could be restored even before the scheduled time.—DNA

'Rejected' art exhibition held

ISLAMABAD: The Chapter 4 explores the theme of 'Rejected' through deeply personal and socially reflective artistic practices was held from April 26 to May 10 in the natural landscape of Chhattar-surrounded by hills and a flowing stream. The residency brings together 17 artists: Ahsan Ahmed, Akhter Iqbal, Aliya Farooq, Anum Malik, Eimaan Aslam, Geytee Ara, Lubna Jehangir, Maheen Syed, Mahnoor Khushhal, Maria Baj, Nabia Zafar, Syeda Nadia Raza, Sadaf Hammad, Saffia Mughees, Sidra Ashraf, Sumria Qazi, and Zainab Sabir, said a press release. In the middle of the residency an In-house baithak was organised with a panel of distinguished artists, educators and curators to engage with the resident artists and their works in progress. It included Rahat Saeed, Aqeel Solangi, Mehrano Khattak, Sajjad Akram and Muhammad Abbas. It certainly was an igniting session. Through diverse mediums and perspectives, the residency examines rejection as loss, resistance, transformation, memory, and healing. Ahsan Ahmed explored rejection through narratives of resilience, self-reclamation, and emotional transformation. His ceramic practice employs cracked, mended, and re-fired forms as metaphors for healing, endurance, and growth. Akhter Iqbal investigated surfaces and structures that resist entry, using voids, impressions, and layered materials to make rejection physically and materially visible. Aliya Farooq approached rejection as a temporary darkness that gradually gives way to acceptance, self-awareness, and wholeness, embracing both fractures and strengths within the self. Anum Malik addressed the emotional violence surrounding marriage-proposal rejection and the silent social pressures imposed upon women by family and society. Eimaan Aslam visualized self-rejection as a monstrous force that conceals one's true identity and inner nature. For Geytee rejection isn't an end; it's a phase. It scars us, but also teaches us. These lifescapes are records of how wounds become waypoints. Maria Baj reflected on silenced identities and unlined possibilities through bodily silhouettes that embody fragmented and rejected selves. Nabia Zafar extended visual narratives into language through bilingual ekphrastic poetry, responding to selected residency works in both Urdu and English. Syeda Nadia Raza highlighted the rejection and marginalization faced by transgender individuals, emphasizing dignity, visibility, and social exclusion. Sadaf Hammad reflected on Quranic verses that question worldly standards, the uncertainty of life, and the purpose of human existence through contemporary calligraphic practice. Saffia Mughees explored memory, preservation, and impermanence through watercolor paintings of abandoned objects and forgotten spaces, transforming rejection into poetic presence.—DNA

Housing shortage drives surge in rental prices

ISLAMABAD: The capital city is witnessing a widening gap between housing demand and supply continues to push rents sharply upward, placing increasing financial pressure on residents, particularly middle-income families and federal government employees. With the city's population expanding rapidly over the past decade due to migration from across the country, employment opportunities in the federal government, and growth in the private

sector, demand for housing has surged significantly. However, the pace of new residential development and completion of planned housing schemes has remained comparatively slow, creating a structural imbalance in the housing market. As a result, rental demand has intensified in well-planned sectors and government-allocated housing schemes, with property dealers reporting consistent and steep increases in monthly rents.—DNA

ANF seizes over 56 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force conducted nine operations around educational institutions and in different cities across the country, arrested 10 suspects and seized 56.70 kilograms(kgs) of narcotics worth more than Rs 6.7 million. According to an ANF spokesperson, several raids were carried out as part of an ongoing crackdown against drug trafficking and supply networks, particularly targeting the sale of narcotics near educational institutions. In Karachi, 2.4 kgs of hashish were recovered from a suspect near Landhi, while at Jinnah International Airport, authorities seized 330 grams of ice concealed in the shoes of a passenger travelling to Bahrain. The accused was arrested. In Sialkot, ANF recovered 300 ecstasy pills weighing 182 grams from a motorcycle rider near Dry Port Chowk.—APP

Varsities asked for national priorities research topics

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIQU) held the 77th meeting of its Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR) under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood where a total of 33 PhD scholars presented their research synopses. On the first day of the meeting 16 PhD scholars from the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Social Sciences presented their research proposals. Participants appreciated the scholars' academic standards, research depth and critical thinking abilities. The meeting was attended by university Deans, Senior Professors, Faculty Members and distinguished external experts from various universities across the country. The agenda of the meeting was presented by Director BASR, Prof. Dr Irshad Ahmad Arshad. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood urged scholars to focus on innovation, national socio-economic development and international research standards in their studies so that research outcomes could effectively benefit society. Regarding the allocation of research topics, the Vice Chancellor directed faculties to select themes aligned with contemporary requirements, national priorities and academic needs to ensure the promotion of quality and impactful research in universities.—APP

Briefs

IRSA releases 165,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 165,600 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 151,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1452.78 feet which was 52.78 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 50,800 cusecs and 70,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1161.40 feet, which was 11.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 38,700 cusecs and 34,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 101,700, 74,000, 52,600, and 13,400 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 39,100 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 14,600 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

PM condemns firing at MPA dera

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed deep concern and strongly condemned the firing incident at the dera (outbuilding) of Member of the Punjab Assembly from Toba Tek Singh Col. (Retd) Ayub Gadhni. The prime minister, in a statement, directed the relevant authorities to complete the inquiry into the incident swiftly to identify those responsible and bring them to justice. Calling Ayub Gadhni one of the hardworking workers of the Pakistan Muslim League (N), the prime minister said that the attack on the MPA while he was listening to public grievances was extremely concerning. He offered prayers for those who lost their lives in the incident and prayed for strength and patience for the bereaved families, as well as for the swift recovery of the injured.

inDrive sparks national conversation

ISLAMABAD: inDrive, a global mobility and urban services platform, recently launched a disruptive campaign that challenged traditional Mother's Day norms. By briefly "cancelling" the holiday across major cities, the platform urged Pakistanis to move beyond social media posts and expensive gifts, focusing instead on alleviating the daily mental load and unspoken longings of mothers through tangible actions.

The campaign kicked off with billboards in Lahore, initially stunning passers-by with the bold message that Mother's Day was being cancelled. This provocative narrative quickly transitioned to reveal inDrive's true intent of replacing a day of hollow words with a day of actual service. The campaign demonstrated how the inDrive SuperApp ecosystem, spanning rides, groceries, and courier, serves as a practical tool for children to step in and handle the everyday tasks their mothers usually manage alone. "We decided to take a different approach because the typical Mother's Day celebration has become too much about talking and not enough about doing," stated Awaiz Saeed, Country Manager, inDrive Pakistan. "Mothers bear an immense mental and physical burden, often managing a complex web of family needs and household responsibilities single-handedly. We wanted to remind people that real love is shown by taking those tasks off her plate.—APP

Al-Shifa Trust helps 140 children beat eye cancer

She advised parents to use a mobile phone torch to check newborns and infants for unusual white reflections in the pupil, medically known as leukocoria, which can indicate retinoblastoma, the most common eye cancer in children

DNA

RAWALPINDI: For hundreds of families bringing their children to Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, the biggest fear is not only cancer, but whether delayed treatment has reduced the chances of saving their child's eyesight and recovery. Doctors at the hospital's Cancer Unit said nearly 140 children treated over the past three years are now free of cancer, a milestone they described as significant in a country where childhood eye cancer is often diagnosed at advanced stages. The hospital said it has registered 620 cancer patients and conducted 3,952 chemotherapy sessions since the unit became operational. Many patients came from low-income and rural families where awareness, transport costs and delayed referrals remain major barriers to treatment. Pediatric oncologist Dr Tanzeela Farah said many parents fail to recognise early warning signs of eye cancer, including a white glow in a child's eye in photographs or poor eye contact. "If detected early, many children can survive and even retain their vision," she told reporters. She advised parents to use a mobile phone torch to check newborns and infants for unusual white reflections in the pupil, medically known as leukocoria, which can indicate retinoblastoma, the most common eye cancer in children.



Restoration of solar street lights begins

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) started the restoration of damaged street lights on Marine Drive under a modern solarization project aimed at reviving the beauty of the coastal highway. Under the project, damaged lights from Syed Zahoor Shah Hashmi Chowk to Boat Basin are being replaced with modern solar-powered street lights to restore illumination along the route at night. According to officials, several street lights on Marine Drive had been damaged over the past few years during protests and political sit-ins, affecting the area's nighttime attraction.

The new solarization system is expected to provide an environmentally friendly and energy-efficient solution while reducing electricity costs and addressing issues such as load shedding and cable theft. Officials said the installation of solar street lights would improve recreational facilities for residents and tourists visiting the coastal area at night and further enhance Gwadar's scenic beauty. The solarization project is expected to be completed soon. Marine Drive is considered one of Gwadar's major tourist and recreational attractions, drawing large numbers of visitors daily to enjoy views of the Arabian Sea. Authorities believe the restoration project will strengthen the city's modern image and boost tourism activities in the region.

Trails for Pak-China friendship summer games 2026 concludes

SARGODHA: Trials for the Pak-China Friendship Summer Games 2026 (Inter-Division) concluded successfully here under the supervision of Divisional Sports Officer Rana Nadeem Anjum, with a large number of young athletes from across the division participating in various sports disciplines, here on Monday. According to details, players from Sargodha, Khushab, Mianwali and Bhakkar took part in the trials with enthusiasm to secure their places in the divisional teams for the upcoming event. Trials for basketball, weightlifting, badminton, table tennis, wushu, gymnastics, volleyball and athletics were held at the Sports Gymnasium and Sports Stadium Sargodha. Football trials were conducted at the University of Sargodha football ground, while tennis trials were held at the university's tennis courts. Officials said a selection committee closely monitored the performance of players to ensure a merit-based selection process for the divisional squads. The trials were also attended by District Sports Officer Saima Manzoor, DSO Mianwali Mumtaz Niazi, DSO Bhakkar Hasnain Malik, Tayyab Bashir and Muntaha Malik. Speaking on the occasion, Divisional Sports Officer Rana Nadeem Anjum said the Pak-China Friendship Summer Games provide a valuable platform for young athletes to showcase their talent and help emerging players excel at higher levels. He expressed hope that the selected athletes would deliver strong performances in the forthcoming competitions and bring laurels to the division.—APP

20 Pakistani varsities begin series of edu expos

DNA

ISLAMABAD/DHAKA (Bangladesh): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan has begun the second series of Pakistan Higher Education Expos to showcase the higher education opportunities for the Bangladeshi students under the Pakistan-Bangladesh Knowledge Corridor. The first exhibition of the series was held in Dhaka. The academic showcasing activity, wherein 20 prestigious Pakistani universities are participating, will also be held in other cities of Bangladesh - including Barisal, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Chittagong, and Rangpur - over the next 10 days. The expos aim to promote academic exchange, research collaboration, and stronger institutional linkages between the two countries under the Pakistan-Bangladesh Knowledge Corridor. Minister for Education (Bangladesh) Dr. A. N. M. Ehsanul Hoque Milon inaugurated the Education Expo in Dhaka, while High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh Mr. Imran Haider, Director General Scholarships HEC Ms. Aayesha Ikram, Mr. Jahanzeb Khan Project Director and other notables were also present on this occasion. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Dr. Ehsanul Hoque Milon appreciated the efforts of HEC Pakistan and the

Pakistan High Commission in Bangladesh for execution of the Pakistan-Bangladesh Knowledge Corridor in letter and spirit. He noted that the Pakistan-Bangladesh Knowledge Corridor is promoting academic collaboration between Pakistan and Bangladesh by offering opportunities for students, faculty, and academic institutions. He affirmed that such engagements will further strengthen bilateral educational relations and people-to-people connection. He urged the Bangladeshi students to actively apply for the Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarships, describing the initiative as a valuable opportunity for talented students. Mr. Imran Haider highlighted Pakistan's excellence in higher education and emerging fields such as Artificial Intelligence, Data Sciences and Aviation. He underlined the features of Pakistan-Bangladesh Knowledge Corridor, asserting that the series of exhibitions over the next 10 days will pave the way for greater collaboration between the two countries by highlighting the avenues of research partnerships, joint programmes, and academic exchanges, in addition to the scholarship opportunities. In her welcome remarks earlier, Ms. Aayesha Ikram presented a detailed overview of the Pakistan-Bangladesh Knowledge Corridor initiative, the Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarships for Bangladeshi students.

OIC-COMSTECH launches workshop on quantum computing

ISLAMABAD: The OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) on Monday launched a five-day international training workshop on Quantum Computing and Quantum Information at its Secretariat under the theme "Advancing the OIC Quantum Frontiers". The workshop has been jointly organised by the OIC-COMSTECH Center for Training and Research on AI and Emerging Technologies and the COMSTECH-Huawei ICT Academy with the aim of promoting quantum literacy, technical capacity building, and scientific collaboration among researchers, students, and professionals from OIC member states. Addressing the inaugural session, Coordinator General COMSTECH Prof Dr M. Iqbal Choudhary said the world was standing at the threshold of a new scientific and technological transformation driven by quantum science and emerging technologies. He noted that quantum computing, quantum communication, and quantum sensing were expected to revolutionise fields ranging from medicine and artificial intelligence to cybersecurity, advanced materials, and energy technologies. He stressed that developing countries must actively participate in this technological transition by strengthening human capital, research institutions, and scientific cooperation. He said COMSTECH was committed to empowering OIC member

states through training programmes, research support, and capacity-building initiatives in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, quantum sciences, and other emerging technologies. Prof Dr Choudhary further highlighted COMSTECH's ongoing efforts in advancing digital transformation across OIC countries, including the development of an OIC-wide AI Vision and the establishment of specialised centres for training and research in AI and emerging technologies. Introducing the objectives of the workshop, Prof Dr Farhan Saif, Consultant (Basic Sciences) at COMSTECH, said the programme had been designed to provide foundational understanding, practical exposure, and collaborative learning opportunities in quantum computing and quantum information sciences. He noted that quantum technologies were rapidly becoming strategically important for scientific progress, secure communication systems, climate modelling, financial technologies, and advanced research applications. President of ECO Science Foundation Prof Seyed Komail Tayebi described quantum technologies as one of the defining scientific frontiers of the coming decades. He emphasised the importance of preparing young researchers, universities, and scientific institutions in developing countries to actively participate in emerging technological transformations.—DNA

Pak-China 52 MoUs, agreements signed

ISLAMABAD: As many as 52 MoUs and trade agreements were signed between Pakistani and Chinese companies to further strengthen Pakistan-China industrial and commercial relations. These MoUs and agreements were inked at the Pakistan-China Business-to-Business Conference held at a local hotel in the presence of Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan, according to Gwadar Pro. The conference was attended by 105 representatives from 74 Chinese companies and 242 representatives from 136 Pakistani companies. In the home appliances sector, 15 MoUs were signed, bringing the largest investment in this sector to up to \$40 million. Similarly, 10 important agreements were reached in the electrical sector, with the largest deal valued at \$60 million. In the battery storage sector, 27 agreements and MoUs were signed, with the largest investment recorded at \$82 million. Negotiations are also ongoing on 40 additional MoUs at the Pakistan-China Business-to-Business Conference, creating new opportunities for industrial cooperation.—DNA

EPEVER powers federal solar project in GB

ISLAMABAD: EPEVER, a leading global provider of solar energy solutions, has announced the deployment of its inverter and battery technologies in a major federal renewable energy project officially inaugurated by Pakistan's Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, in Gilgit-Baltistan. The landmark project includes a 100MW solar system in Gilgit-Baltistan and a 56MW solar panel distribution initiative, representing a significant step toward expanding clean energy access and promoting sustainable power development in remote regions of Pakistan, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Monday. During the inauguration ceremony, Prime Minister Sharif remotely activated the power station, with EPEVER's products prominently featured as part of the deployed solar energy solution. Amid rising demand for reliable and sustainable energy solutions across Pakistan, EPEVER's hybrid inverters, lithium batteries, and energy storage system (ESS) solutions have seen growing adoption in residential, commercial, and public-sector renewable energy projects nationwide.—APP

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KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO
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2020 KARATE

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US Power Projection at Arab Expense

QAMAR BASHIR



WHEN the United States entered into direct military confrontation with Iran in late February 2026, it did so with full knowledge that the battlefield would not be North America, nor would the economic shock primarily devastate the American mainland. The war theater would be the Gulf itself – the territory, airspace, ports, oil routes, and infrastructure of America's Arab allies. More importantly, much of the financial burden associated with maintaining this military architecture would ultimately be absorbed by the Gulf states hosting the very bases used to project American power. From the outset, Washington mobilized an enormous military machine across the region. Carrier Strike Groups 3 and 12 were moved into operational positions, advanced missile-defense batteries were activated, and approximately 50,000 U.S. troops spread across at least 19 military locations in the Gulf were placed on heightened readiness. Major operational hubs such as Al Udeid Air Base, Camp Arifjan, and the U.S. Fifth Fleet headquarters in Naval Support Activity Bahrain became the nerve centers of military coordination. But while the Pentagon projected military strength, the financial mathematics of the conflict revealed a very different reality. Reports emerging during the first phase of the conflict estimated that U.S. military operations were costing between \$890 million and \$1 billion per day. In just the first 100 hours, expenditures reportedly reached approximately \$3.7 billion. By early May 2026, cumulative operational costs were estimated to have crossed \$60-70 billion. These costs included naval deployments, fuel consumption, aerial sorties, missile interceptions, intelligence operations, logistics, and rapid replenishment of depleted weapons stockpiles. The most alarming aspect for American military planners was not merely the money being spent, but the speed at which strategic inventories were being consumed. Reports indicated that the United States had used nearly half of some of its most expensive missile stockpiles during the confrontation. Replenishment timelines for advanced interceptors and precision-guided systems were estimated at up to four years due to production bottlenecks and industrial limitations. Modern warfare had exposed an uncomfortable truth: even the world's largest military-industrial complex struggles to sustain prolonged high-intensity conflict against a technologically capable adversary. Yet the deeper irony of the war was this: despite these staggering numbers, the Gulf states themselves were still expected to absorb a substantial portion of the broader operational and infrastructural burden. For decades, Washington's military footprint in the Gulf has operated through an interconnected system of host-nation financing, infrastructure sharing, arms purchases, and sovereign investment recy-

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 186

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394

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cling. Gulf governments provide land, utilities, strategic access, construction financing, logistics corridors, and maintenance support for American installations. Qatar alone historically covered roughly 60 percent of the costs associated with Al Udeid Air Base, amounting to approximately \$650 million in infrastructure support. Saudi Arabia previously paid nearly \$500 million to offset the deployment costs of American troops stationed inside the kingdom. The 2026 conflict intensified this financial dynamic dramatically. Iranian retaliatory strikes reportedly caused approximately \$800 million in damage to U.S.-operated facilities during the first two weeks of escalation alone. Reports also suggested that U.S. aerial equipment losses reached as high as \$2.8 billion. Yet much of the reconstruction, repair, and operational continuity costs were expected to be negotiated with Gulf host states rather than borne exclusively by Washington. In practical terms, the Gulf states found themselves paying for the consequences of a war unfolding on their own soil while the United States retained strategic command and global leverage. This is where the geopolitical equation becomes extraordinarily advantageous for Washington. First, the United States projects military dominance across the Middle East without carrying the entire financial burden alone. Second, Gulf states continue purchasing massive quantities of American weapons to reinforce their own defenses. Between 2019 and 2023, Gulf nations accounted for approximately 22 percent of global arms imports, much of it sourced directly from U.S. defense manufacturers. In May 2026 alone, Washington fast-tracked more than \$8.6 billion in new weapons sales to Gulf allies and regional partners. Third, instability in the Strait of Hormuz indirectly benefits American energy exporters. Washington understood from the beginning that any escalation with Iran would threaten or partially restrict traffic through the world's most important oil chokepoint. The disruption of Gulf energy routes naturally drives global consumers to seek alternative suppliers. As Gulf exports become politically risky or operationally uncertain, American oil and liquefied natural gas gain competitive advantage in Asian, African, and European markets. Thus, while Gulf states suffer from higher insurance premiums, shipping disruptions, aviation risks, and investor anxiety, the United States simultaneously expands energy influence, increases defense exports, and reinforces its strategic leverage. This explains why many analysts increasingly describe the arrangement as a "cost externalization model." The geopolitical benefits remain concentrated in Washington, while much of the geographic exposure and economic shock remains localized within the Gulf. The contradiction is especially painful for Gulf governments because the same military bases intended to provide protection have now become potential targets. Iranian officials repeatedly warned that states facilitating military operations against Iran could face retaliatory strikes. As missiles and drones targeted facilities linked to American operations, Gulf policymakers were forced to confront a difficult question: are these bases security guarantees, or are they magnets for escalation? The debate has become increasingly visible inside United Arab Emirates and other Gulf capitals where strategists now openly question whether permanent dependence on external military umbrellas truly serves long-term regional stability.

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

Punjab Government and Governance

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Transparency and accountability present another dimension of comparison. The extent to which decision-making processes are open and subject to scrutiny remains a critical indicator of governance quality. Both administrations have faced challenges in this regard, reflecting systemic issues that extend beyond individual leadership. Strengthening accountability mechanisms requires not only political will but also institutional reform a task that demands sustained commitment

IN Pakistan's evolving political landscape, governance is no longer judged merely by rhetoric or electoral success. It is increasingly measured by outcomes service delivery, institutional performance and public trust. Nowhere is this more evident than in Punjab, the country's most populous and politically decisive province. The contrasting administrative approaches of Usman Buzdar and Maryam Nawaz Sharif offer a revealing lens through which to examine the state of governance in the province. The concept of good governance, long championed by global institutions and local reformists alike, rests on a set of core principles: transparency, accountability, efficiency and responsiveness. Yet, in practice, these ideals often collide with political realities. Punjab's recent administrative history reflects this tension, shaped by shifting political priorities, bureaucratic inertia and the enduring challenge of translating policy into practice. The tenure of Usman Buzdar, spanning from 2018 to 2022, unfolded under a political environment defined by centralised decision-making and a strong reliance on bureaucratic structures. Critics frequently described his administration as one where the civil service assumed an outsized role in governance, often at the expense of political direction. Supporters, however, argued that this reliance ensured continuity and stability in administrative processes. Under Buzdar, several initiatives were introduced with the stated aim of improving service delivery, particularly in health and local government. Yet, the broader perception of his tenure remained mixed. Questions were raised about the pace of decision-making, the clarity of policy direction and the overall effectiveness of governance mechanisms. The absence of a strong political narrative often left the administration appearing reactive rather than proactive, a perception that proved difficult to dispel. In contrast, the current administration led by Maryam Nawaz Sharif presents a markedly different style of governance. Her leadership reflects a more assertive political approach, characterised by visible engagement, frequent public messaging and a focus on high-impact initiatives. This shift underscores the role of political leadership in shaping governance outcomes a factor often underestimated in administrative analyses. Maryam Nawaz's governance model appears to prioritise visibility and

responsiveness. From public outreach campaigns to targeted policy interventions, her administration has sought to project an image of active and engaged leadership. This approach resonates with a broader trend in contemporary politics, where public perception and communication are integral to governance itself. However, visibility alone does not equate to effectiveness and the long-term impact of such an approach remains to be seen. The comparison between these two administrations highlights a fundamental question: what constitutes good governance in Punjab's context? Is it the steady, if unremarkable, functioning of bureaucratic systems, or the dynamic, politically driven pursuit of reform? The answer likely lies somewhere in between. Effective governance requires both administrative competence and political vision—an equilibrium that has often proved elusive. One area where this contrast is particularly evident is service delivery. Under Buzdar, efforts to streamline administrative processes yielded incremental improvements in certain sectors. However, these gains were often overshadowed by broader concerns about governance capacity. In the current administration, there is a greater emphasis on flagship projects and visible reforms. While such initiatives can generate momentum, they also raise questions about sustainability and institutionalisation. Transparency and accountability present another dimension of comparison. The extent to which decision-making processes are open and subject to scrutiny remains a critical indicator of governance quality. Both administrations have faced challenges in this regard, reflecting systemic issues that extend beyond individual leadership. Strengthening accountability mechanisms requires not only political will but also institutional reform a task that demands sustained commitment. The role of the bureaucracy further complicates this picture. In Punjab, as in much of Pakistan, the civil service remains a central pillar of governance. Its effectiveness, however, is contingent upon the clarity of political direction and the consistency of policy frameworks. During Buzdar's tenure, the perceived dominance of bureaucratic actors raised concerns about accountability and responsiveness. Under Maryam Nawaz, the relationship appears more politically driven, though it is too early to assess

its long-term implications.

It is also important to situate this comparison within the broader structural context. Governance in Punjab is shaped by a complex interplay of factors, including fiscal constraints, institutional capacity and socio-economic disparities. No administration operates in a vacuum and the challenges faced by both Buzdar and Maryam Nawaz reflect deeper systemic issues. Addressing these challenges requires more than administrative adjustments; it demands a comprehensive rethinking of governance frameworks. The question of sustainability looms large in this discussion. Short-term gains, whether achieved through bureaucratic efficiency or political activism, must be translated into long-term institutional improvements. This requires a shift from personality-driven governance to system-driven reform—a transition that has historically proved difficult in Pakistan's political context. Public trust, arguably the most intangible yet critical element of governance, also hinges on this transition. Citizens are less concerned with the mechanics of governance than with its outcomes: access to quality education, reliable healthcare and economic opportunity. The ability of any administration to deliver on these expectations ultimately determines its legitimacy. The comparative study of Usman Buzdar and Maryam Nawaz Sharif thus offers more than a political narrative; it provides insights into the evolving nature of governance in Punjab. It underscores the importance of balancing administrative efficiency with political leadership, of aligning short-term initiatives with long-term goals and of prioritising institutional strength over individual authority. As Punjab moves forward, the lessons from these contrasting approaches will be crucial. Governance is not a static concept; it evolves with changing political, social and economic realities. The challenge for policymakers is to adapt to these changes while remaining anchored in the principles of good governance. The test of governance in Punjab is not merely about comparing past and present administrations. It is about charting a path forward—one that combines the strengths of both approaches while addressing their limitations. Whether this path can be realised will depend on the willingness of political leaders to move beyond short-term considerations and invest in the long-term institutional development of the province.

Shining Military & Diplomatic Skies, Clouded Economic Horizons

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Burdened by colossal debts, the government finds its hands tied. Resources that should nourish development, build infrastructure, and uplift the masses are instead consumed by interest payments and obligatory repayments. Unwillingly, leaders are compelled to take decisions that sting the common citizen—decisions that do not spring from the heart's desire...

AS the moon rises in the velvet expanse of the night, its silver light touches every shore and every mountain, reminding us of a universal harmony visible to all. In the same manner, Pakistan's military and diplomatic moon has ascended with full brilliance, casting a glow of respect and strength far beyond our borders. Our armed forces stand as a bulwark of honour, while our diplomatic sagacity have navigated complex global currents with wisdom and resolve. Yet, in this journey of lights, our economic moon lingers hidden behind thick clouds of uncertainty. Its dimmed radiance fails to illuminate the path forward, leaving a shadow that stretches from the modest homes of labourers and farmers to the stately chambers of governance. This hereditary weakness has become a heavy chain around the neck of the state, preventing it from extending the hand of genuine welfare to its people. Burdened by colossal debts, the government finds its hands tied. Resources that should nourish development, build infrastructure, and uplift the masses are instead consumed by interest payments and obligatory repayments. Unwillingly, leaders are compelled to take decisions that sting the common citizen—decisions that do not spring from the heart's desire for progress but from the harsh demands of survival. Inflation, that ferocious demon, has broken loose and now devours the purchasing power of ordinary families. The price of flour, medicine, fuel, and daily necessities climbs relentlessly, turning dreams of modest comfort into distant memories. Global shifts have compounded the ordeal; fluctuating commodity markets, geopolitical tensions, and the sharp rise in petroleum products have poured fuel upon the fire of our economic imbalance. What was once a manageable strain has become a crisis threatening to engulf hard-won achievements in other domains. Shall Pakistan, adorned with laurels in security and statesmanship, now sink into the quagmire of economic instability and perpetual indebtedness? Must we remain forever tethered to the conditional prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund, adjusting our policies not according to the aspirations of our own people but to

external benchmarks? These piercing questions call for deep reflection by the nation, its leadership, and every conscientious citizen. The future of our development, the dignity of our people, and the true meaning of sovereignty hang in the balance. It is encouraging that a national austerity campaign has been initiated. Cutting unnecessary expenses, promoting simplicity in official conduct, and urging restraint in public spending reflect a welcome awareness of the crisis. Yet such measures, though virtuous, offer only partial relief. They cannot by themselves mend structural fractures or generate the momentum required for lasting recovery. What the hour demands is an emergency approach, waged with the same unity, discipline, and determination that have brought victory on military and diplomatic fronts. Pakistan has shown the world the power of coordinated effort; the time has come to harness that same spirit for economic deliverance. At both national and provincial levels, all stakeholders must rise above partisan, personal, or regional interests. A living covenant of cooperation must be forged—one rooted in mutual trust and shared sacrifice. Provinces, instead of competing for scarce resources, should collaborate on projects of mutual benefit such as agriculture, water management, and industrial corridors. Political parties, civil society, business leaders, and the youth must join hands, placing the collective good above all else. On the external plane, civil and military leadership bear a joint responsibility. Economic strength is no longer separate from national security; without it, even the finest strategic gains may prove fragile and short-lived. To translate this vision into reality, a bold and multi-pronged way forward is essential. First, the nation must pursue self-reliance with missionary zeal. Broadening the tax net, eliminating evasion through transparent mechanisms, and rewarding compliant taxpayers would strengthen public finances without overburdening the poor. Second, agriculture—the backbone of our economy—requires urgent modernisation. Provision of quality seeds, efficient irrigation systems, fair credit facilities, and support for value-added processing can

transform rural areas into hubs of productivity and employment. Third, a vigorous export drive must be launched. Small and medium enterprises, often the unsung heroes of growth, deserve easier access to finance, skill development, and global market linkages. Diversifying exports beyond traditional items and exploring new destinations in Asia, Africa, and beyond will help earn precious foreign exchange. Loss-making public enterprises must be restructured or privatised with care and transparency, protecting workers while relieving the exchequer of endless subsidies. Strict control over non-development expenditure, elimination of ghost employees, and plugging leakages in public procurement are non-negotiable. Investment in human capital remains paramount: quality education, technical and vocational training, and accessible healthcare will equip our young population to become assets rather than liabilities. Restoring investor confidence is equally critical. Policy continuity, sanctity of contracts, speedy justice, and a business-friendly environment will encourage both local and foreign capital to flow into productive ventures. Regional cooperation offers another promising avenue. Peaceful trade in energy and goods with neighbours can open new arteries of prosperity. At the same time, a culture of saving and prudent financial management must be cultivated at every level—from government to households. Borrowing should be directed solely towards self-sustaining projects, never for consumption or showpiece ventures. The road ahead is steep, yet Pakistan has repeatedly demonstrated its resilience in the face of adversity. The same national character that has lit up our military and diplomatic skies can surely disperse the clouds over our economy. What we require is not despair but determined action; not division but unbreakable unity of purpose. If government, institutions, and citizens march together with wisdom, sacrifice, and unwavering focus on the national interest, the economic moon will surely rise in its full splendour, spreading light, hope, and prosperity across the beloved homeland.

Briefs

Tehran warns Europe against 'hostile'...

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Beijing's Commerce Ministry ordered Chinese firms not to comply with US blacklisting of several refineries, invoking its anti-foreign sanctions law. China described the US measures as unilateral, illegal, and lacking UN authorization, reaffirming its consistent opposition to such extrajudicial actions. These developments highlight the complex international fallout from the recent Iran-related conflict, with Tehran seeking to exploit divisions between the US and Europe, while major powers like China push back against Washington's maximum pressure campaign. The statements reflect heightened sensitivities around diaspora protections, maritime security, and global sanctions enforcement as diplomatic efforts continue to stabilize the region.

Iran says made 'legitimate'..

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security in the region and Lebanon were other demands of Iran, which are considered a generous and responsible offer for regional security." Baqaei said Washington continued to uphold "unreasonable" and one-sided demands. According to remarks reported by Iran's semi-official Tasnim News Agency, the Iranian official cautioned that any intervention in the affairs of the Strait of Hormuz will further "complicate" the matter, stressing that the issue was the "aggressive actions" of the US and Israel. "We have conveyed this very clearly to European countries that they should not allow the temptations of the United States and the Zionist regime in regional issues to cause them to be unintentionally drawn into a crisis that will not benefit them," Iran's semi-official outlet ISNA quoted Baqaei as saying.

Pakistan extends austerity...

FROM PAGE 01
Fuel prices recorded a sharp increase in the country following oil supply disruption from the closing of the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for oil and gas shipping. Islamabad City Guide Iran closed the strait in response to joint attacks by the US and Israel, which began on February 28 and ended on April 8 following a Pakistan-mediated ceasefire. Despite the extension in the ceasefire, the two sides remain at odds over proposals for a permanent end to the war, particularly over their respective blockades of Hormuz. In the March 9 televised address, PM Shehbaz said that the entire region was gripped by Middle East conflict and stressed that Pakistan was pursuing diplomatic efforts to help defuse the crisis. He then announced the austerity plan applicable across federal government institutions, including ministries, departments, autonomous bodies, state-owned enterprises, the legislature, defence organizations and the judiciary.

Pakistan summons Afghan...

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with evidence collected and technical intelligence, indicates that the attack was masterminded by terrorists residing in Afghanistan. Reiterating Pakistan's grave concern over the continued use of Afghan soil for terrorist attacks against Pakistan, it was impressed upon the Afghan side that Pakistan reserves the right to respond decisively against the perpetrators of this barbaric act. It was further highlighted that the continued presence of various terrorist organizations on Afghan soil, and the permissive environment enabling their operations, have been well documented in reports by the UN Monitoring Team and other international organizations.

Australia include uncapped trio on white-ball tours of Pakistan

Mitchell Marsh will captain all squads, with Australia to play three ODIs against Pakistan in Rawalpindi and Lahore from May 30 before travelling to Bangladesh for three ODIs in Dhaka in the run-up to the T20 series

DNA

SYDNEY: Australia will use the upcoming white-ball tours of Pakistan and Bangladesh to test their depth after naming squads featuring three potential debutants, selectors said on Monday. All-rounder Liam Scott has been included in the ODI squads for Pakistan and Bangladesh, with Victoria batter Ol-

lie Peake joining him in the Pakistan squad. T20 specialist Joel Davies has been included in the squad for three T20Is in Chattogram, Bangladesh, starting on June 17. Mitchell Marsh will captain all squads, with Australia to play three ODIs against Pakistan in Rawalpindi and Lahore from May 30 before travelling to Bangladesh for three ODIs in Dhaka in the run-up to the T20 series. "It's always exciting to

see new players get an opportunity to play international cricket and be a part of the national team," selector George Bailey said in a statement. "The blend of experienced players coupled with new or returning players will provide a nice mix for these subcontinent tours." Fast bowlers Billy Stanlake and Riley Meredith return for the Pakistan ODIs, while spinner Tanveer Sangha was named

in both 50-over squads. Meredith will also remain with the group for the T20 leg in Bangladesh. Travis Head, Cooper Connolly, Ben Dwarshuis and Xavier Bartlett will join the squad for the Bangladesh ODIs after their Indian Premier League commitments, replacing Peake, Stanlake, Meredith and Matt Short. Left-arm quick Spencer Johnson returns for the T20 component along with Aaron Hardie.



ISLAMABAD: Officials of the Razi Sports Academy in group photo with the players. Former RCCI President is also seen in the picture. - DNA

Sporting activities encourage youth to adopt healthy lifestyles

SARGODHA: University of Sargodha hosted the concluding ceremony of the All-Pakistan Universities Football Championship 2025-26, where State Minister for Health Services Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bherth said sports taught young people how to rise after failure and turn defeat into success. Addressing the prize distribution ceremony as the chief guest, Dr Bherth said sporting activities encourage youth to adopt healthy and positive lifestyles while providing them opportunities to showcase their talent at national and international levels. He said talented young athletes not only bring pride to themselves but also earn recognition for the country through their achievements. The ceremony was attend-

ed by Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Qaisar Abbas, Pro Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Masood Sarwar Awan, businessman Rana Shahid Mehmood, Director Sports Mehr Ahmed Khan Haral, Chairman University Sports Committee Prof Dr Ijaz Rasool Noorka, university officials, players, coaching staff and a large number of students. Dr Bharath said he felt proud to belong to the same region and praised the rapid progress made by the university over the past two decades at both national and international levels. Referring to the country's recent challenges, he said Pakistan had started transforming "the impossible into possible" in recent years and expressed confidence that the younger generation

would play a key role in shaping the country's future. Speaking on the occasion, Prof Abbas said universities were not merely centres of learning but institutions that helped develop the physical, mental and leadership abilities of students. He said sports promoted discipline, tolerance, teamwork and healthy competition among young people, adding that inter-university competitions also strengthened inter-provincial harmony by bringing together students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The vice chancellor said 12 universities from across the country participated in the championship and appreciated the Directorate of Sports for organising the event successfully. - APP

Unmanned lab opens with robots

TOKYO: A Tokyo-based university has opened a laboratory where robots are carrying out medical experiments once handled by human researchers as it aims to eventually automate nearly the entire research process. The facility at the Institute of Science Tokyo's Yushima campus, known as the Robotics Innovation Center, features 10 robots, including a humanoid model called Maholo LabDroid, and no human staff. The university plans to significantly increase the number of automatons in the long run, integrating automation systems with artificial intelligence. Using two arms, robots can perform delicate tasks such as transferring fixed amounts of reagents and opening the doors of temperature-controlled equipment to place, remove items. - APP

DG Khan school tragedy case: main suspect held

DG KHAN: Police have made a significant breakthrough in the tragic Little Scholars School tragedy case by arresting the main absconding suspect, Sheikh Akram. According to details, the accused had been continuously evading arrest since the sad incident and was frequently changing his location. Acting on special directives of the District Police Officer (DPO) DG Khan, a special team comprising SP Investigation Abdul Rahim Laghari, DSP City Muhammad Fazal, SHO City Abid Hussain and SHO Gadayi Arshad Shah was formed to trace and apprehend the suspect. The police team conducted raids at various locations and utilized modern technology and other sources to track down the accused. After continuous surveillance and professional investigation, police successfully arrested Sheikh Akram and shifted him for further interrogation. Police officials said investigations were underway into aspects of negligence, carelessness and possible facilitation related to the tragic incident. The DPO stated that no leniency would be shown to anyone involved in the tragedy and assured that all responsible would be brought to justice in accordance with the law. It is pertinent to mention that the tragic incident at Little Scholars School had shocked the entire district, leaving four innocent children dead and several others injured. - APP

China seeks 'more stability'

FROM PAGE 01
The American people can expect the president to deliver more good deals on behalf of our country." Trump's first trip to China in his second term will feature pomp and ceremony including a tour of the Temple of Heaven in Beijing and a lavish state banquet, the White House said. This is the first visit by a US president to China since 2017.

NA resolution lauds role...

FROM PAGE 01
and credible investigation "into what clearly appeared to be an overt false-flag operation, India proceeded to launch an unprovoked airstrike on Pakistan on May 6, 2025, targeting innocent civilians". The NA commended the "bravery and operational excellence of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), which swiftly established air superiority and shot down multiple Indian aircraft, including the much-hyped and pride of the Indian Air Force 'Rafale' jets". It also extended heartfelt gratitude to every officer, soldier, airman and sailor of the armed forces on the battlefield for "making Operation Bunyanum Marsoos successful through their courage, professionalism and sacrifice". The resolution highlighted that the armed forces destroyed an Indian brigade headquarters, as well as Brahmos facilities that had "fired missiles in Pakistan". It added that PAF's JF-17 Thunder jets "destroyed India's \$1.5 billion most sophisticated S-400 air defence asset".

KP CM Afridi decries...

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The statement quoted Afridi as saying that the KP police had shown bravery and courage against terrorism. He said that the people of the province had to stand up for their rights, otherwise the "imposed circumstances" would continue to prevail. "We have been continuously saying that terrorists are again rearing their heads, but decisions behind closed doors have been imposed on us for the last 78 years," he lamented, adding that the imposed policies had "pushed the province into a quagmire of unrest". "We have made immense sacrifices [in the fight] against terrorism. Further unrest is unacceptable," he asserted. "The provincial government and police will fight against terrorism together," Afridi said, noting that the government would oppose every decision against peace in the province and the people's interests.

Plot to coerce girl into...

FROM PAGE 01
ascertained that she was allegedly training at a terrorist camp. Terming the investigation's results as "very unfortunate", Bugti noted that the method of exploitation by the terrorists involved "honeytrapping" women, then blackmailing them. In this case, by threatening to kill the girl's father if she did not comply with their orders, the chief minister added. "The plan was to perform a suicide attack in Islamabad," the chief minister said. He contended that the objective of the attack, which he alleged was orchestrated by agents of India's intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), was to sabotage the improved reputation Pakistan was currently enjoying on the international stage. The Balochistan CM said the girl perhaps did not know that Islamabad was the target and was to be told at the last minute, commending the intelligence agencies for foiling a major plan. In addition, he stressed that the girl had been exploited in an egregious way and slammed those who were responsible for it, asking, "They would exploit their own Baloch girls? Their own daughters, their own sisters ... and to please international masters? Can you conceive of it?"

FC Barcelona secures La Liga title with Clasico win

BAKU: FC Barcelona won this season's La Liga title on Sunday with a 2-0 win over Real Madrid in the Camp Nou, Xinhua reports. The win leaves Barcelona 14 points clear of Real Madrid at the top of the table, confirming its domination over the opponent for the second consecutive year. Real Madrid striker Kylian Mbappe was sidelined with a hamstring problem and with Federico Valverde also sidelined after his well-publicised fight with Aurelien Tchouameni, Dean Huijzen was a late scratch as he suffered a problem in warmup. Ferran Torres was the architect of Barcelona's best moments in the first half, forcing a foul from Antonio Rudiger in the ninth minute, which allowed Marcus Rashford to open the scoring with an unstoppable delivery that left goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois helpless. Torres doubled Barcelona's lead in the 18th minute with a sharp finish after Dani Olmo set the striker up with a smart backheel. Rashford had a great chance to add a third goal before the break after Torres again set him through on goal, but this time Courtois tipped the shot wide and Olmo hit his shot wide from the resulting corner. Real Madrid struggled to react at the start of the second half, with Courtois cutting out a dangerous Rashford cross and saving well from Torres. Jude Bellingham saw a goal ruled out for offside, and Barcelona goalkeeper Joan Garcia did well to save from Vinicius as Real Madrid briefly tried to show some spirit. - APP

Australian tennis 'true legend' Anderson dies aged 91

"Tennis in Australia has lost one of its greats, and a lot of us have lost a mate and mentor," says Pat Rafter

SYDNEY: Mal Anderson, the first unseeded player to win the US Open men's singles title, has died aged 91, Tennis Australia said on Monday. Anderson's career started on a dirt court on a farm and he went on to become an Australian tennis great, winning the US crown in 1957 and three major doubles titles. Although unseeded at what was then the United States Championships, Anderson beat three seeds and dropped only two sets on his way to the title. He also won the Davis Cup twice. After retirement Anderson mentored young Australian players including Pat Rafter, who went on to become world number one. "I was really sad to hear of Mal's passing. He was one of those people who helped shape my tennis from very early on," said Rafter, who twice won the US Open. "He was a true legend of the game, but more importantly he was a terrific bloke - humble, generous with his time and always happy to help younger players along. "Tennis in Australia has lost one of its greats, and a lot of us have lost a mate and mentor. I feel very lucky to have known him." - APP



US Democratic congressmen demand Trump administration break silence

The lawmakers, led by Congressman Joaquin Castro of Texas, argue that the US silence on Israel's nuclear programme is no longer defensible in light of recent regional developments, particularly the war with Iran

WASHINGTON: Thirty Democratic members of the US Congress are pushing Secretary of State Marco Rubio to break Washington's long silence on Israel's nuclear arsenal, according to a report The Washington Post. The lawmakers, led by Congressman Joaquin Castro of Texas, argue that the U.S. silence on Israel's nuclear programme is no longer defensible in light of recent regional developments, particularly the war with Iran. These lawmakers asked Rubio for detailed information about Israel's nuclear programme, including its enrichment capabilities and where enriched material is produced. They also asked whether Israel had conveyed to the United States its "red

lines" for using nuclear weapons in the current conflict. While Israel is believed to have possessed nuclear weapons since the 1960s, it maintains "a policy of nuclear opacity, never officially confirming the existence of its nuclear weapons programme and arsenal," according to the Washington, DC-based Nuclear Threat Initiative. The White House has also long maintained ambiguity on the issue, despite a handful of glancing admissions. In turn, lawmakers in Congress have rarely launched coordinated public efforts for greater transparency amid decades of bipartisan support for Israel. "Congress has a constitutional responsibility to be fully informed about the nuclear

balance in the Middle East, the risk of escalation by any party to this conflict, and the administration's planning and contingencies for such scenarios," a letter, signed by 30 members of Congress, said. "We do not believe we have received that information." "A policy of official ambiguity about the nuclear capabilities of one party to this conflict makes coherent nonproliferation policy in the Middle East impossible," the letter said, "for Iran, for Saudi Arabia, and for every other state in the region making decisions based on their perceptions of the capabilities of their neighbours." In the letter, dated May 4, the lawmakers plainly ask Rubio what nuclear weapon ca-

pabilities Israel has, as well as clear information on its warheads and launchers. They particularly focused on the Negev Nuclear Research Center in Dimona, long believed to be the core of Israel's nuclear programme. "Does Israel currently possess enrichment capabilities, and at what level?" they asked, appealing for details on both fissile material and plutonium production. The letter further asked whether Israel, which is not a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), has articulated to the US any "nuclear doctrine, red lines, or thresholds for nuclear use in the context of the current conflict with Iran?" - APP

Briefs

PSX loses over 609 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 609.51 points, a negative change of 0.36 percent, closing at 170,506.31 points against 171,115.82 points on the last trading day, according to PSX data. During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 1.103 billion shares with a traded value of Rs 31.044 billion, compared to 1.025 billion shares valuing Rs 36.667 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization declined to Rs 18.869 trillion from Rs 18.903 trillion a day earlier. Out of 488 active companies in the ready market, 234 advanced, 215 declined, and 39 remained unchanged. K-Electric topped the volume chart with 376.827 million shares, followed by Agha Steel Industries with 51.877 million shares and Cnergyco PK with 47.390 million shares. The top gainers included Nestle Pakistan Limited, which increased by Rs 230.52 to close at Rs 7,731.58, and PIA Holding Company Limited, which gained Rs 130.94 to settle at Rs 19,400.00. On the losing side, Shahmurad Sugar Mills Limited declined by Rs 24.52 to close at Rs 395.17, while Hafiz Limited fell by Rs 16.01 to close at Rs 415.00. In the futures market, 324 companies traded, of which 126 recorded gains, 194 declined, and 4 remained unchanged, according to PSX data.—APP

AG lauds ZTBL reforms, outreach to small farmers

ISLAMABAD: President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited, Tahir Yaqoob Bhatti, called on the Auditor General of Pakistan, Maqbool Ahmad Gondal, and briefed him on the bank's reforms and transformation strategy, which helped strengthen institutional performance and expand financial services for small farmers. During the meeting, the ZTBL president highlighted the "Reforms and Transformation Strategy" launched in 2023, which, he said, helped the bank overcome financial and administrative challenges and emerge as a financially stable and progressive institution, a news release said. Tahir Yaqoob said ZTBL had achieved record financial performance in recent years while generating more than 900 employment opportunities for fresh graduates and postgraduates across the country. He said the bank was enhancing outreach to small farmers through digital banking products and services, enabling easier access to agricultural financing and banking facilities. The ZTBL president further informed that the bank was following a unique business model under which branch managers and mobile credit officers visit villages and remote areas to provide agri-financing and other banking services at the doorsteps of farmers.—APP

Rupee gains 03 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.67 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 278.70. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279.10 and Rs 279.85, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee increased by Rs 0.71 and closed at Rs 328.10 from the previous day's close of Rs 327.39, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.77, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 0.37 and closed at Rs 379.05 compared to the previous day's Rs 378.68. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham remained stagnant at Rs 75.87, while the Saudi Riyal declined by 02 paise to close at Rs 74.28.—APP

Malik assures full support for refinery sector

The Minister stressed that timely upgradation of existing refineries is essential to enhance production capacity, improve efficiency, and ensure supply of cleaner Euro V fuels in line with international standards. He stated that refinery upgradation will enable Pakistan's refineries to produce Euro-V compliant fuels, contributing significantly towards improved environmental outcomes, better engine performance, and reduced emissions



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik chaired a high-level meeting at the Petroleum Division with the CEOs/Managing Directors of the country's oil refineries to review and accelerate the operationalization of Brownfield Upgradation Refinery Policy. At the outset, the Federal Minister underscored the strategic importance of the

refining sector and emphasized that local refineries are critical national assets for ensuring uninterrupted fuel supply and strengthening Pakistan's energy security. He noted that the ongoing regional situation arising from the US-Iran conflict has further highlighted the urgency of reducing reliance on external supply chains and ensuring maximum domestic refining flexibility / capability. The Minister stressed that timely upgradation of existing refineries is essential to enhance production capacity,

improve efficiency, and ensure supply of cleaner Euro V fuels in line with international standards. He stated that refinery upgradation will enable Pakistan's refineries to produce Euro-V compliant fuels, contributing significantly towards improved environmental outcomes, better engine performance, and reduced emissions. The Federal Minister observed that despite the issuance of both refining policies in 2023, progress on implementation has remained stalled. He emphasized that removing the

bottlenecks is crucial for moving forward with refinery modernization and attracting long-term investment in the sector. During the meeting, the refining policies and the Upgradation Agreement template were reviewed in detail to ensure their effective and timely operationalization. The CEOs/Managing Directors highlighted key challenges and proposed practical measures for resolution. They stated they had full confidence in the Petroleum Division efforts.

Govt urged to provide relief to SMEs

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry President Muhammad Saleem Memon has urged federal government to provide relief to small traders and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the upcoming budget to save small businesses across the country to face a severe crisis. While expressing his views on upcoming federal budget 2026-27 here Monday, Saleem Memon said that additional withholding taxes, complex tax system and anti-business policies had already created difficulties for traders and industrialists, while new financial constraints likely may further hamper business activities. The Chamber President demanded the government to introduce a simplified tax system for SMEs in the Budget 2026-27, reduce withholding taxes and provide incentives to join the documentary economy instead of harassing traders. He further demanded that businesses with a turnover of up to Rs.50 million for small traders be exempted from unnecessary inquiries and the strict conditions of Section 111 so that as many small traders can become part of the documentary economy without fear or doubt. Speaking further on the budget proposals, Chamber President Saleem Memon said that the increasing industrial and commercial electricity tariffs and the continuous increase in the prices of petroleum products had put the survival of small traders and industries at risk. The Chamber President demanded that a special electricity relief package be introduced for small and medium enterprises in the budget 2026-27, industrial tariffs be reduced and immediate steps be taken to stabilize the prices of petroleum products. Saleem Memon demanded the government and the State Bank of Pakistan to introduce low-markup financing schemes for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), young entrepreneurs and cottage industries in the Budget 2026-27 to support local industries. He added that due to high interest rates and expensive bank financing, small traders and industrialists were facing difficulty in continuing their business, while traditional industries of Hyderabad were declining due to government indifference. The Chamber President demanded that special incentives, easy loans and export facilities be provided for handicrafts, bangle making, embroidery and other cottage industries in the Budget 2026-27 so that local industries can be reactivated and employment opportunities can be increased.—DNA

China tightens cosmetics trade rules to protect public health

BEIJING: China's General Administration of Customs (GAC) said Monday that it has issued a revised set of rules on inspection and quarantine for cosmetics imports and exports, in a move to safeguard public health. Effective from Dec. 1, 2026, the revised rules will strengthen coordinated oversight across the entire industry chain, facilitate cross-border trade, and support the development of new business models, GAC official Li Jingsong told a press conference. With the revised rules in place, customs authorities nationwide will strengthen coordination with drug regulators and other relevant departments to better align safety oversight of imported and exported cosmetics with the domestic regulatory system, Li said. Additionally, major procedures such as import declarations, on-site inspections and laboratory testing will be standardized, while non-compliant products found at port checkpoints will be returned or destroyed according to laws and regulations, Li added. According to the GAC, the revised rules streamline customs supervision of cosmetics for exhibition to meet demand for product debuts and launches. Eligible imported samples and exhibits will enjoy faster clearance and a shorter time to market, allowing consumers to access new international products sooner. Cosmetics imports and exports have become an important part of China's foreign trade and have posted steady growth. In 2025, the total value of such trade reached 171.61 billion yuan (about 25.06 billion U.S. dollars), up 2.7 percent year.—DNA

UK, France to host defense ministers meeting on Hormuz

LONDON: The UK and France will host on Tuesday a multinational meeting of defense ministers on military plans to restore trade flows through the Strait of Hormuz, the British government said. The announcement came hours after Iran warned London and Paris against sending warships to the region. "The Defense Secretary John Healey will co-chair a meeting of over 40 nations, alongside his French counterpart, Minister Catherine Vautrin, for the multinational mission's first Defense Minister's meeting," a British defense ministry statement said Sunday. The virtual meeting follows a two-day gathering in London in April of military planners who thrashed out the practicalities of a multinational mission led by the UK and France to protect navigation in the key waterway following a sustainable ceasefire. "We are turning diplomatic agreement into practical military plans to restore confidence for shipping through the Strait of Hormuz," Healey said. It comes as France and Britain despatched warships to the Middle East. France has sent its nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, the Charles de Gaulle, to the region, and the UK on Saturday said it was sending a destroyer, HMS Dragon. Both countries said the deployments were a "pre-positioning" ahead of any international mission to help protect shipping. HMS Dragon's deployment was part of "prudent planning" that would ensure the UK was ready to help secure the strait when conditions allowed, a ministry spokesperson told AFP. But Iran's deputy foreign minister, Kazem Gharibabadi, earlier Sunday warned Britain and France their warships — "or those of any other country" — would meet "a decisive and immediate response." "Only the Islamic Republic of Iran can establish security in this strait," Gharibabadi said. Macron said later Sunday that France had had "never envisaged" a naval deployment in the Strait of Hormuz but rather a security mission that would be "coordinated with Iran." Speaking to journalists in Nairobi, he said he was sticking to his position opposing a blockade from either side, and to "reject any toll" to ensure ships are able to pass through the strategic waterway. Britain and France said last month that plans to secure the strait were coming together. The British defense ministry said deploying HMS Dragon would strengthen the confidence of commercial shipping and support mine clearance efforts once hostilities end. Before the US-Israel war on Iran started on February 28, about a fifth of the world's oil was shipped through the strait. But that has been throttled since the war as Iran largely closed the strait, throwing global markets into turmoil and driving up oil prices. The US later imposed its own blockade of Iranian ports in response.—DNA

DGTO digitalization essential for ease of doing business: ICCI

The ICCI President said that the world economy was rapidly moving towards digitization, automation, and data-driven governance, adding that Pakistan must accelerate reforms to establish a modern and efficient business ecosystem. He observed that the digitalization of DGTO processes would help simplify regulatory procedures, reduce paperwork, improve communication, and enhance operational efficiency for trade organizations.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The digitalization of Directorate General of Trade Organizations (DGTO) processes will play a vital role in improving transparency, efficiency, and ease of doing business in Pakistan. This was stated by the President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, while delivering the closing address at the "Change Management Session on Digitalization of DGTO Processes". The event was organized by Directorate General of Trade Organizations in collaboration with Pakistan Single Window, said a press release. Sardar Tahir Mehmood appreciated DGTO and PSW for taking a timely initiative towards institutional modernization and stakeholder facilitation. He particularly acknowledged the contributions of Adnan Khan, Director DGTO; Pir Shah Gul, Deputy Director DGTO; Rizwan

Samad, Deputy Manager PSW; Muhammad Ahmad, Domain Officer PSW; Shah Zeb, Staff Business Analyst; and Noman Khan, Business Analyst PSW for conducting an informative and productive session. The ICCI President said that the world economy was rapidly moving towards digitization, automation, and data-driven governance, adding that Pakistan must accelerate reforms to establish a modern and efficient business ecosystem. He observed that the digitalization of DGTO processes would help simplify regulatory procedures, reduce paperwork, improve communication, and enhance operational efficiency for trade organizations. He appreciated the consultative approach adopted by Pakistan Single Window by involving Chambers of Commerce and Trade Associations during the development phase of the automated system. He remarked that reforms become more effective and sustainable when stakeholders and end users are actively engaged in the process. Highlighting

the importance of change management, Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that digitalization was not only about introducing technology but also about building confidence, enhancing technical capacity, and ensuring adaptability among stakeholders. He stressed the need for continuous awareness sessions, training workshops, and technical support mechanisms for smooth implementation. The ICCI President emphasized the importance of developing a secure, integrated, and user-friendly digital platform capable of effectively addressing the practical needs of trade organizations across different regions of the country. He assured DGTO and PSW of ICCI's full cooperation in making the reform initiative successful through strong public-private partnership and institutional collaboration. Distinguished representatives of Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations, and business organizations from different regions participated in the session physically and virtually through Zoom.

Japan provides \$12m thru WB to support Palestinian health, edu

LONDON: Japan has contributed about \$12 million to support fiscal stability and public health in the Palestinian territories through World Bank projects. The Representative Office of Japan to Palestine said that the funds will support essential sectors impacted by the fiscal deficit resulting from the Gaza conflict and amid tightening Israeli restrictions on the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. It said: "The education and health sectors, which together account for approximately 60 percent of total wage expenditures, are particularly critical, and the inability to fully pay salaries in these sectors poses a direct threat to the continued operation of schools and healthcare facilities." The funds will be distributed through the World Bank's Palestinian Fund for Reconstruction and Development, according to the Wafa News Agency. Support for the health sector will provide clinic services to 8,040 people across six public hospitals, along with essential medical equipment, medicines, and supplies. The PFRD program supports vulnerable groups and recovery efforts in Gaza, alongside projects focused on human capital development and private sector growth.—APP

London Heathrow airport traffic dips due to Mideast war

LONDON: London's Heathrow Airport announced Monday that passenger numbers dropped in April as the Middle East war disrupted global air travel. The airport handled 6.7 million passengers last month, down 5.3 percent from one year earlier, Heathrow said in a statement. Heathrow, Europe's busiest airport, said that the decline reflected "the ongoing impact of the Middle East conflict on some markets and short-term adjustments to travel plans." "While we have seen some short-term disruption linked to the Middle East conflict, demand for travel remains strong with current fuel supplies stable," said the airport's chief executive Thomas Woldbye.—APP

Syria FM hails new phase of partnership with Europe

BRUSSELS: The European Council said on Monday it had adopted a decision terminating the partial suspension of the cooperation agreement between the European Economic Community and the Syrian Arab Republic, thereby restoring fuller trade ties with Syria. It said the move marked an important step toward strengthening bilateral relations between the European Union and Syria. The decision "sends a clear political signal of the EU's commitment to re-engage with Syria and support its economic recovery," the European Council added in a statement. An EU official said the aim was to back reconstruction of the country devastated by more than a decade of civil war that sent millions fleeing abroad, and where "the reality on the ground is still appalling." Some 13 million Syrians — nearly half the population — depend on food assistance, the official said. Needs are enormous, and the EU has already pledged 620 million (\$730 million) in aid for the 2026-2027 period. But Syria's stability also interests many EU countries because its nationals have made up the lion's share of asylum-seekers in the bloc over a decade — and there is a push for large numbers to eventually go back home. "We need the Syrian transitional government to succeed in bringing stability to the country, because that's in our interest," said one EU diplomat. The 27-nation bloc launched a new chapter with Syria after Assad was swept from power in December 2024.—APP

Briefs

Workers' remittances rise 11%

DNA

KARACHI: Overseas Pakistanis remitted \$3.53 billion in April 2026, marking an 11.4% increase compared to the same month last year, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said on Monday. However, the inflows declined by 7.6% on a month-on-month basis compared to March 2026, when the country received \$3.83 billion in workers' remittances. According to the central bank, cumulative remittances during the first 10 months of FY26 reached \$33.86 billion, showing an 8% increase compared to the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year. Saudi Arabia remained the largest contributor during April, with Pakistanis residing in the kingdom sending \$841.7 million. The United Arab Emirates followed with \$734.7 million, while remittances from other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries stood at \$325 million. Overall inflows from the Middle East amounted to nearly \$1.9 billion during the month, according to SBP data. Analysts said the yearly growth momentum in remittances remained strong despite the monthly decline, which followed higher inflows recorded around Eid-related transfers in recent months. Pakistan's remittances target is around \$41 billion by the end of FY26, compared to \$38 billion recorded in FY25.

EU agrees to restore trade ties with Syria

DNA

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IT exports projected to hit \$4.6bn this year

Prime Minister Shehbaz instructed to accelerate the establishment of Asaan Khidmat Centers in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and foster collaboration with provincial governments to launch the facilities across the provinces



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday chaired a review meeting on the affairs of the Ministry of Information

Technology and Telecommunication, wherein it was informed that the number of domestic internet connections in the country had surged from 1.9 million in 2024 to 5.10 million this year, and IT exports were expected to touch \$4.6 billion during the

current fiscal year. The prime minister said that promoting the IT sector and increasing IT-related exports were among the government's priorities. He emphasized that Pakistan's youth possessed immense potential in the IT field,

which must be fully utilized. Prime Minister Shehbaz instructed to accelerate the establishment of Asaan Khidmat Centers in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and foster collaboration with provincial governments to launch the facilities across the provinces. He said that cooperation from provincial and district-level governments should be sought to reduce the digital gap between urban and rural areas in the IT sector. During the briefing on various initiatives for the promotion of IT, it was told that a recent 5G services auction was held in Pakistan, marking the world's largest such auction since 2016, generating \$509 million in revenue for the country. Besides, the "Indus AI Week" was organized in February 2025 to promote Artificial Intelligence, featuring events across 30 cities, participated by over 100 international delegates, and featuring 88 pavilions. It was informed that fiber connectivity has been provided to government schools and health units in Islamabad, and the provision of free internet hotspots in the capital was in its final stages. The participants were also told that E-learning pods were being installed in Saidpur Model Village and Fatima Jinnah Park. The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Ahmad Khan Cheema, and Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani, and other high-ranking government officials.

Imaan, Hadi submit additional documents

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Human rights lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, have submitted additional documents to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, bringing these on record before the hearing on Tuesday, May 12, on their plea, which seeks to set aside the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) order denying interim relief in the controversial social media posts case. In December 2025, Imaan Mazari and her husband moved the Supreme Court to set aside the IHC's decision that denied the interim relief in the controversial social media post case against the couple. The petition argued that the high court had "erroneously and illegally refused" to exercise the discretion to grant ad-interim relief to the petitioners to stay the criminal trial, as recording of evidence before the trial court in their absence was not only a violation of Section 353 CrPC, but also their due process and fair trial rights under Article 10A of the Constitution. The additional documents, submitted by their counsel, Faisal Siddiqi, on Monday, consist of the charge sheets of different dates against the petitioners, their statements before the trial court and the orders issued by the court.

Justice Aurangzeb calls for alternative dispute resolution



NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb has called on the judiciary to encourage alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and detailed the Supreme Court's ongoing efforts to establish a mediation centre. In remarks aired on television on Monday, the SC judge stressed the need for mediators to be referred more cases, saying, "For that, the courts have to be willing to refer cases to mediation and must never think that by doing so, they are shying away from their primary responsibility of adjudication."

He noted that, having already paid lawyers, parties were reluctant to pay a fee for mediators and, therefore, some mediation centres had a policy of pro-bono mediations. "To encourage parties to go into mediation, what we have decided now is to train as many judges as mediators, and also officials in the high court and the Supreme Court who are law graduates, who will be willing to conduct mediation in their own pay scale," the judge said. Justice Aurangzeb, along with Lahore High Court's Justice Jawad Hassan, was presenting a keynote address at the launch event in Islamabad of "ADR ODR International x ICDRL Peacemakers Community (AIPC)", linked to the International Centre for Dispute Resolution Lahore (ICDRL). Justice Aurangzeb also said that the SC was in the process of establishing a "court-annexed mediation centre", with financial assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He highlighted that the SC now had two accredited, trained mediators and that the law ministry was starting a programme on Monday to train more mediators. "By the end of this year, I hope to take the number to at least a dozen, so that parties who cannot afford to pay for the mediators are referred to the mediation centre, which will be housed in the Supreme Court [...] for mediation to be conducted free of cost," the judge said.

Azerbaijani Interior Minister condemns Bannu terror attack

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has received an official letter from his Azerbaijani counterpart, Colonel General Vilayat Eyyazov, expressing strong condemnation of the recent terrorist attack in Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In the letter, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan strongly condemned the tragic suicide attack and expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of Pakistani police personnel. Minister Eyyazov conveyed heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyrs and expressed solidarity with the people of Pakistan. "We are deeply saddened by the unfortunate incident in which police personnel embraced martyrdom and others were injured," the Azerbaijani Interior Minister stated. He reaffirmed that Azerbaijan firmly condemns all forms of terrorism and continuously supports global efforts aimed at eliminating the menace of terrorism. Responding to the letter, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi expressed gratitude to the Azerbaijani government for its solidarity and condolences. "We express our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the brotherly people of Pakistan over this tragic incident," the message said. - DNA

Pakistan slashes Gwadar Port fees

New tariff incentives aim to boost transit and transshipment cargo

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Monday announced sweeping reductions in tariff rates at Gwadar Port aimed at strengthening the deep-sea facility's position as a competitive regional logistics and transshipment hub. In a statement, the minister said the revised policy is designed to significantly increase transit and international transshipment container traffic through Gwadar, while attracting global shipping lines and enhancing overall port activity. "Under the revised tariff structure, berthing fees for container vessels and ships carrying transit or transshipment cargo have been reduced by 25%. Charges on international transshipment container cargo have been slashed by 40%, while transit container cargo charges have been cut by 31%," he said. In a major incentive aimed at improving cargo handling efficiency, the port will also provide one month of free storage for general cargo, compared to the standard five-day allowance at other national ports. "These incentives take effect immediately, and further adjustments will be reviewed in phases based on operational data and market response," the minister added, noting that future revisions would be guided by cargo trends, regional competition, and sustainability considerations. Chaudhry said the measures form part of a broader strategy to transform Gwadar into a competitive, investor-friendly, and modern deep-sea port serving as a strategic gateway for trade with Central Asia, the Middle East, East Africa and beyond. - DNA

Finance Minister reaffirms commitment to tax reforms



SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting today at the Finance Division with a delegation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP). Welcoming the delegation, the Finance Minister emphasized the importance of continued engagement with professional bodies and industry stakeholders to ensure that economic and taxation policies remain responsive, practical, and aligned with the country's broader reform objectives. The Finance Minister shared the Government's ongoing efforts to transform the tax administration system through reforms centered around people, processes, and technology. He underscored the importance of institutional modernization, process simplification, and enhanced automation to improve transparency, reduce unnecessary human intervention, and facilitate taxpayers. In this context, he highlighted the operationalization of the Tax Policy Office under the Finance Division as an important institutional reform aimed at strengthening policy formulation and improving coordination between tax policy and administration. The meeting also covered the growing role of technology and digital systems in strengthening compliance, enforce-

ment, and revenue administration. The Finance Minister noted that AI-led production monitoring and technology-driven oversight mechanisms introduced across various sectors are helping improve documentation, strengthen compliance, and reduce leakages within the system. The delegation presented a range of proposals and recommendations relating to documentation, group taxation structures, export-oriented services, and harmonization of tax treatment across sectors. Discussions also focused on measures aimed at improving competitiveness, facilitating investment, strengthening ease of doing business, and supporting effective revenue mobilization alongside broadening of the tax base. The Finance Minister acknowledged the proposals and recommendations shared by the delegation and noted that these would be carefully reviewed as part of the ongoing budget formulation process. He reiterated the Government's commitment to building a transparent, technology-driven, and facilitative tax system that supports economic growth, encourages documentation, and strengthens governance and institutional effectiveness. The delegation was led by Mr. Samiullah Siddiqui, President ICAP, and included Mr. Jehanzaib Amin, Vice President ICAP; Mr. Ahmed Raza Mir, Vice President ICAP; and Mr. Zeeshan Ijaz, Council Member ICAP and Chairman Economic Advisory Committee.

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