



Islamabad POST

Thursday, May 14, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Khawaja Asif: no difference between Kabul and New Delhi

Detailed News On Page-08

Aurangzeb and US delegation hold parleys

Detailed News On Page-08



Info Minister slams India for propaganda

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Cambridge confirms paper leak

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Cambridge International Education (CIE) on Wednesday confirmed the leak of an AS-level Mathematics exam paper held on May 12, and announced the postponement of another Mathematics paper scheduled for Friday, May 15. Amid recent reports of Cambridge exam paper leaks, students who appeared for an AS-level Mathematics paper on Tuesday made fresh claims that the paper they received was identical to a solved paper they had come across on social media just a day earlier. "We can confirm that Cambridge International AS-Level Mathematics Paper 52 (9709), taken in our administrative zones 3 and 4 on May 12, was shared prematurely against our strict regulations," said a statement issued by the board on Wednesday. "We investigate such incidents promptly and thoroughly and we are now working to understand the extent of the leak and determine next steps." The statement said that "as an additional security and identification measure", and upon discussions with "key stakeholders" in the country.

5 martyred in clash with terrorists

DNA

RAWALPINDI: On the morning of 13 May 2026, troops of Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps Balochistan commenced an area sanitization operation at general area Nosham of Barkhan District to eliminate terrorists of Indian backed Fitna Al Hindustan. During the operation, a group of terrorists was located and engaged by troops. During fire exchange seven terrorists of Indian backed Fitna Al Hindustan were sent to hell. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists. However, during intense fire exchange, five brave sons of soil including a field officer met the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat. Shuhada include Major Tauseef Ahmed Bhatti (age 31 years, resident of District Pakpattan), Naik Fida Hussain (age 36 years, resident of District Sukkur), Sepoy Zakir Hussain (age 32 years, resident of District Skardu), Sepoy Suhail Ahmed (age 21 years, resident of District Khanewal) and Sepoy Muhammad Ayaz (age 24 years, resident of District Rahim Yar Khan).

On May 23

PM Shehbaz to undertake China visit

Pakistan and China share a longstanding strategic partnership with ties that span various sectors, including trade, energy, defence, and infrastructure. The two countries are also set to mark the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations on May 21

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is set to undertake a three-day visit to China, starting May 23, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Tuesday. DPM Dar made the announcement while addressing the launch ceremony of the IBI Pakistan Digital Economy Centre in Islamabad. He said that the premier would undertake an official visit to China from May 23 to 26. Dar added that premier was also set to attend a B2B forum on May 24 during the visit. Earlier this month, President Asif Ali Zardari completed a five-day visit to China, which was aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation across key economic sectors. He also oversaw the signing of multiple memoranda of understanding (MoUs). Pakistan and China share a longstanding strategic partnership with ties that span various sectors, including trade, energy, defence, and infrastructure. The two countries are also set to mark the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations on May 21. The visit comes at a time when Pakistan has remained engaged in facilitating engagement between the US and Iran in the past month, of which China has also been a part.

Continued on Page 06

PM Shehbaz directs steps for SMEs

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed that the commercial banks take steps to ensure the access of women entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to easy loans, besides assisting them in exporting their products. The prime minister, chairing a review meeting here regarding government measures for the uplift of SMEs, said that the SMEs held full potential for the development of the national economy and increasing the exports. He said it was encouraging that Special Assistant to PM for Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan and his SMEA team were working on an emergency basis to

Continued on Page 06

Investure ceremony

Bahrain Ambassador, CEO Serena Boolani, others get awards

Nishan-i-Imtiaz (posthumous) was conferred upon late Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, and Irfan ul Haq Siddiqui in recognition of their outstanding services to the country



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday conferred Pakistan's civil awards on various personalities including the Pakistani nationals and foreigners in recognition of their outstanding services in various fields. Pakistan Travel Guides The investiture ceremony was held at the Awan e Sadr in which different personalities were decorated with the civil awards in rec-

ognition of their services in health, education, literature, journalism, public, research, diplomatic matters, sports and economy. The ceremony was attended by First Lady Aseefa Bhutto, the federal ministers, Chairman Senate, parliamentarians, members of the civil society, diplomats, media and a large number of people. Nishan-i-Imtiaz (posthumous) was conferred upon late Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, and Irfan ul Haq Siddiqui in recognition of their outstanding services to the country.

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF AZERBAIJAN



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Federal Minister Aaleem Khan, Musadaq Malik, Salik Hussain, Shaza Fatima, Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and others cutting cake to celebrate the Independence Day of Azerbaijan. - DNA

'Imran Khan loses vision in one eye'

Salman Akram Raja also claims PTI founder allegedly suffered torture in jail and faces health risks

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja on Wednesday claimed that the party founder, Imran Khan, had lost the vision in his one eye due to alleged torture in prison and faced serious health risks in custody. "Today, all doors of justice appear closed," Raja told reporters outside the Supreme Court in Islamabad, alleging that the PTI founder had been imprisoned for 1,000 days and was being denied basic constitutional rights. The claim comes days after Khan was administered a fourth

Continued on Page 06

Trump in China for Xi summit as Tehran, US ceasefire teeters

Trump widely expected to encourage China to convince Tehran to make a deal with Washington to end conflict

NEWS DESK

BEIJING/SEOUL: President Donald Trump landed in Beijing accompanied by an entourage that included Nvidia's Jensen Huang and Elon Musk on Wednesday after pledging to urge China's Xi Jinping to "open up" to US business at the start of their two-day summit. Trump embarks on the first visit by a US president to China in nearly a decade eager to snag some deals, maintain a fragile trade truce with the world's second economy, and prop up public approval ratings bruised by his war with Iran. The CEOs accompanying Trump are drawn mainly from companies seeking to resolve business issues with China, such as Nvidia,

Continued on Page 06

Russia places former UK defence minister on wanted list

DNA

LONDON: Russia has placed British former defense minister Ben Wallace on a wanted list in connection with an unspecified criminal investigation, state media said on Wednesday, citing the Russian Interior Ministry's database. Wallace served as the UK's defense minister from before

Continued on Page 06

To coordinate operation

Mossad chief, Shin Bet head visited United Arab Emirates

According to the report, which cited sources informed in the matter, the UAE carried out the strikes secretly as a response to Iran targeting Emirati civilian and energy infrastructures

DNA

DUBAI: Mossad chief David Barnea visited the UAE at least twice during Operation Roaring Lion to coordinate regarding the war, the Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday, citing Arab officials and a source familiar with the matter. Barnea reportedly flew to the UAE in March and April. According to KAN News, Shin Bet chief David Zini also visited the UAE, and the two countries were coordinated on security issues during the war. Tech News Reviews The report comes just after the WSJ published that the UAE was behind some of the recent strikes against Iranian assets, such as the attacks on Lavan Island's refinery at the beginning of April. According to the report, which cited sources informed in the matter, the UAE carried out the strikes secretly as a response to Iran targeting Emirati civilian and energy infrastructures. Iran later sent another barrage of drones and missiles against both the UAE and Kuwait in response to this attack, even if there was no official confirmation of who was behind it at that time.

Continued on Page 06

US intelligence assesses Iran retains 70% of prewar missile stockpile

DNA

NEW YORK: Iran is still in possession of the majority of its stockpiles of mobile launchers and missiles, suggesting that its military remains far stronger than President Donald Trump has asserted, according to a report in The New York Times. Citing people familiar with the assessments, the newspaper said that intelligence findings from early May show Iran has regained operational access to most of its missile sites, including 30 of the 33 missile sites along the Strait of Hormuz. According to the report, Iran can still use the missile stockpiles in non-operational sites by launching

Continued on Page 06

MONAL

NOW SERVING ON MURREE EXPRESSWAY

30 KM on Islamabad - Murree Expressway
Park Ridge Apartment, Lower Topa

+92 325 0000661-62

monalmurree

CM approves uplift projects across Punjab

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday approved the launch of multi-billion rupee development projects across the province under the District Development Plan and directed commissioners to ensure visible progress on the ground along with strict monitoring of public welfare schemes. Chairing a meeting of divisional commissioners, here, the CM ordered all districts to be financially empowered and autonomous. Commissioners of Sahiwal, Sargodha, Faisalabad and Multan divisions briefed the meeting on available resources and proposed development projects CM Maryam Nawaz also expressed displeasure over the death of a three-year-old girl who fell into an open ditch in a private housing society in Faisalabad division and ordered strict action against negligent housing society owners. She directed all private housing societies to submit monthly affidavits confirming that no open manholes existed in their areas and warned that if any citizen fell into a manhole, the concerned owners would be arrested. She further directed authorities to issue notices to private housing societies across Punjab and ensure strict monitoring of government and private school buildings. All construction sites, she said, must be properly cordoned off in accordance with standard operating procedures to prevent accidents. Addressing commissioners, the chief minister said, "No eye-wash, we need actual ground work. Commissioners should now be visible in the

field instead of sitting in air-conditioned rooms." She stressed that administrative authority also carried responsibility and directed district administrations to ensure deep-cleaning operations in all tehsils. "The amount of work visible on the ground is not what it should have been. The public must receive relief," she said, adding that commissioners were the "eyes, ears and arms" of the government. CM Maryam Nawaz ruled out favouritism and directed all officers to work strictly on merit. She also ordered strengthening of monitoring mechanisms to eliminate shortcomings and warned that no negligence would be tolerated. During the briefing, the meeting was informed that Sahiwal division had Rs4 billion available under local government funds, while development projects worth Rs1.12 billion would be launched in Sahiwal city and adjoining areas. 10 major roads spanning 18.8 kilometres would be constructed at a cost of Rs862 million and repair and reconstruction work would be completed by September 2026. Projects included construction of a 3.2-kilometre road from DPO Chowk to DPS Chowk, upgradation of Farid Town Road and construction of Sher Dil Chowk to Samundari Road. The chief minister directed authorities to ensure international-standard roads in Sahiwal and ordered reconstruction of old urban roads and construction of farm-to-market roads in rural areas. The meeting was informed that roads from Harappa Road to DPS Road and from Girls College to Bhaiya Chowk would also be built. CM Maryam Nawaz made it mandatory to construct pavements level with roads. In Chichawatni, Ahmad Nagar Bypass and Girls College Bypass Road would be construct-

ed along with roads in Chak 138/9-L and Chak 186/9-L. The chief minister directed authorities to beautify Chichawatni Chowk and convert the main market into a model bazaar, while warning against encroachments. The meeting was further informed that in Okara, Papi Pahar Road would be upgraded and a road from Gogera to Thata Sarang constructed. Solar streetlights would also be installed on Main Akbar Road and floodlights at Jinnah Stadium. For Pakpattan, the meeting approved five urban, five rural and four beautification schemes, including construction of Northern-Southern Bypass and Malka Hans Road. A sports arena would also be established near the cricket stadium and DPO office. All 17 schemes in Sahiwal division are expected to be completed by September 2026. The meeting also approved development projects worth Rs2.8 billion for Sargodha division from local revenues, including construction of Shahpur Lak Morr Road and beautification of Bhera. An entry point at Sial Morr Motorway Interchange and a pedestrian bridge on Sargodha University Road would also be built. The CM directed authorities to accelerate installation of Safe City cameras in Sargodha. The briefing further stated that access to Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology would be improved and Rahman Pura Road upgraded. In Khushab, a family park and bus stand would be established in Quaidabad, while roads in Bhakkar city would be upgraded. Development projects in Darya Khan include revamping of Kallar Kot Road, a kids' area, ladies park and bus station, besides beautification of Mankera entry point and installation of streetlights on Mianwali Road.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov called on Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Malik.

Neelum valley hub of natural beauty, academic potential

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor of the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Prof. Nasir Jamal Khattak, has said that Neelum Valley, endowed with abundant natural beauty and resources, holds immense potential to emerge as one of the most attractive destinations for higher education, particularly for students from across the country. He made these remarks during his visit to the university's Neelum Campus, where he reviewed academic, administrative, and infrastructural arrangements and reaffirmed institutional support for strengthening the campus in line with modern requirements, received a press release here on Wednesday. During the visit, Prof. Khattak interacted with students, faculty members, and administrative staff, and inspected academic facilities, including computer laboratories and library resources. He stressed the need for modern educational tools and a conducive learning environment to ensure the delivery of higher education. He observed that the Neelum Valley Campus, situated in one of the country's most scenic and tourist-attracting regions, possesses unique potential to become a preferred academic destination, combining learning opportunities with an inspiring natural environment. He assured full administrative support for the campus's future development. The Vice Chancellor reiterated that students and faculty of Neelum Campus would continue to receive equal attention and resources as other campuses of the university.—APP

GB governor Mehdi confers civil awards

GILGIT: A prestigious Investiture Ceremony was held at the Governor House Gilgit, where prominent personalities from various walks of life were honored with Pakistan Civil Awards following the approval of the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The ceremony was attended by senior government and military officials, political and social figures, representatives of civil society, dignitaries, and family members of the award recipients. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Syed Mehdi Shah congratulated the awardees and said that these honors were a recognition of their national services, dedication, professional excellence, and valuable contributions to public welfare. During the ceremony renowned educationist Dr. Mola Dad Shafa was awarded the Sitara-i-Imtiaz for his outstanding services in the field of education, while

noted Naat reciter Khwaja Ali Kazim received the Presidential Pride of Performance Award for his contributions to the arts. Similarly, Ghulam Nabi was honored with Tamgha-i-Imtiaz for services in education, Imranullah Hunzai for visual arts, Muhammad Amin Zia for literature and poetry, and Tasneem Zahra for social services. The speakers at the ceremony termed the achievements of the award recipients a matter of pride for both Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistan. Governor Syed Mehdi Shah stated that these distinguished personalities were bringing honor to the region and the country through their talent and services, adding that such recognitions would also inspire the younger generation. Special prayers were also offered at the conclusion of the ceremony for the peace, prosperity, and development of the country.—APP

Blood donation camp held to mark 'Marka-e-Haq'

MIRPUR: A blood donation camp and commemorative ceremony has been organized at the Divisional Headquarters Teaching Hospital here to mark the first anniversary of "Marka-e-Haq", with participants paying tributes to the Pakistan Army and the success of Operation "Banyan Marsus". The event was chaired by the hospital's Medical Superintendent, Dr Ijaz Ahmed, and attended by senior officials including Senior Superintendent, Police, Khurram Iqbal, Principal, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College, Professor Dr Faisal Bashir, and District Health Officer, Fida Hussain Raja. The doctors, nurses, paramedics, faculty members and other hospital staff attended the ceremony in large numbers. The speakers praised the sacrifices and services of Pakistan's armed forces in defending the country, maintaining peace and combating militancy. The participants also reaffirmed their commitment to national unity, stability and support for the armed forces. A commemorative cake as cut during the ceremony, while attendees chanted slogans in support of Pakistan and its military. A special blood donation drive, organised alongside the event, saw participation from the hospital employees and members of civil society. The organisers said the campaign symbolised national solidarity, humanitarian service and remembrance of those who had lost their lives in the line of duty. The speakers said the initiative also highlighted the importance of donating blood to help patients in need and pledged to continue promoting humanitarian and welfare activities. The special prayers were offered for the country's security.—APP

Prohibition of Plastic Book Covers Bill passed

ISLAMABAD: In a decisive environmental breakthrough, both Houses of Parliament have passed Senator Sherry Rehman's Prohibition of Plastic Book Covers Bill, 2026, enforcing an immediate ban on plastic book covers across the Islamabad Capital Territory. The legislation marks a significant step against single-use plastics and toxic "forever chemicals", which continue to devastate ecosystems, public health, and urban infrastructure across Pakistan. Calling it a "necessary intervention against an expanding environmental crisis," Senator Rehman said the law responded to the accelerating scale of global plastic pollution and Pakistan's disproportionate vulnerability to its impacts. She added, "I look forward to the ministry making the rules for this and pursuing it." Senator Rehman stated, "Plastic can take up to 1,000 years to decompose. It is choking our rivers, storm drains, landfills and coastlines while leaving dangerous microplastics in our food, soil and water. This is no longer an environmental

inconvenience, it is a public health emergency." Senator Rehman underscored that the legislation came at a time when the world has generated over 400 million tonnes of plastic waste, of which only nine percent has ever been recycled. Pakistan alone produced nearly three million tonnes of plastic waste annually, with less than three percent recycled, much of it through the informal sector lacking environmental safeguards or accountability. "These figures expose the scale of neglect," she said adding, "We are drowning in plastic while recycling remains symbolic rather than systemic." The Bill specifically banned the manufacture, import, sale, and use of plastic book covers, a widely used but entirely replaceable single-use product in schools, stationary markets, and retail supply chains. While often perceived as harmless, these covers contributed significantly to microplastic leakage and toxic chemical exposure, particularly in high-temperature environments. Senator Rehman stated, "Under the new law, violations will attract penalties

of up to Rs 50,000 for first-time offences, reflecting the seriousness of environmental non-compliance. The cost of inaction was far greater than any fine. "Enforcement is not punitive, it is protective. Citizens must also play their part in reporting violations that have become normalised in our markets and schools." She added that she would personally begin compliance monitoring of major retail outlets next month, allowing businesses a transition period to phase out plastic materials and adopt sustainable alternatives. Senator Rehman warned that Islamabad's green infrastructure was already under pressure from rapid urban expansion, construction, and waste mismanagement. "Islamabad's green areas are already under strain. The city does not need more toxins clogging its storm drains or adding to non-biodegradable waste burdens," she noted. The legislation was expected to reduce pressure on drainage systems, mitigate flood risks linked to clogged infrastructure, and limit the spread of microplastics in soil and water systems.—DNA

Chashma Bridge project progress reviewed

QUETTA: On special directive of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Provincial Minister for Communications and Works (C&W) Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa, Secretary C & W Babar Khan on Wednesday paid a detailed visit to the under-construction Chashma Bridge project and reviewed the ongoing construction work. Chief Engineer Quetta Zone Abdul Rahim Bangulzai, Executive Engineer Roads Kuchlak Division Qazi Sanaulah and other relevant officials were also present on the occasion of the visit. The officials inspected different parts of the project while a detailed briefing was given regarding the ongoing construction activities, quality of construction and speed of the project. Executive Engineer Roads Kuchlak Division Qazi Sanaulah informed about the technical aspects of the project, challenges faced in the use of funds and the expected completion period and said that the construction of the bridge is continuing keeping in mind the modern requirements. He said that the completion of the project would provide better travel facilities to the surrounding areas. On this occasion, Secretary Communications and Works (C&W) Babar Khan said that Chashma Bridge has been under construction for a long time, due to which the residents of the area are facing severe difficulties. Therefore, the project has been given an emergency status. He directed to expedite the construction work and said that timely completion of this important project of public interest is among the priorities of the government. Secretary Babar Khan also listened to the problems of the residents of the area during the visit and directed the Executive Engineer Roads Kuchlak Division to resolve the problems being faced by the public related to the bridge on priority basis so that the citizens could benefit from the fruits of this project as soon as possible.—DNA

Kundi calls for unity, peace in Pashtun belt

Governor Khyber Pakhtunwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday said the people of the province including tribal districts were playing an important role in the national economy, adding that the government would continue extending full support for facilitation of the business community, promotion of investment and economic stability


ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday said the people of the province including tribal districts were playing an important role in the national economy, adding that the government would continue extending full support for facilitation of the business community, promotion of investment and economic stability. He expressed these views while

addressing a gathering of the Pashtun community here at Tarnol. Tribal leader Malik Inayat Mehsud, former adviser to the chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ajmal Khan Wazir, tribal political leader Kifayatullah and tribal elder Anwar Khan Suleman Khel also addressed the gathering. A large number of prominent members of the Pashtun community from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

attended the event. Leaders of tribal organizations highlighted the problems and challenges being faced by Pashtun traders, tribal people and the business community. Governor Kundi said the Pashtuns would have to work together for restoration of peace in the Pashtun belt. "It has always been my stance that no one from outside will come to establish peace in our region. We ourselves

will have to unite for the future of our generations," he said. He appreciated the unity of the community and stressed the need for promoting an atmosphere of harmony and tolerance in Pakistan. The Governor said problems should be resolved through dialogue instead of violence and efforts should be made to further strengthen the culture of negotiations. Speaking on the occasion, former






provincial adviser Ajmal Wazir emphasized the need for coordinated government measures to address the issues being faced by tribal districts and the Pashtun business community. The tribal elders also thanked Governor Kundi for his cooperation, sympathy and positive role during a recent tragic incident and appreciated his efforts for resolution of the problems faced by tribal people.—DNA



The Smooth Moving Connection


freeline MOVERS

PACKING, SHIPPING & FREIGHT FORWARDING

Our Services

- Packing
- Shipping
- Freight Forwarding
- Land, Sea & Air Freight
- Custom Clearance
- Relocations
- Office Removals
- Fine Art Handling
- Project Management
- Pet Relocation
- Warehousing
- Storage



Head Office
3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.
Tel: (+92 51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822711, 2874289 - Fax: (+92-51) 2825132, 2274227.
E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

Branch Offices

<p>Karachi Floor No: 14, 15, 3rd Floor, National Bank Bldg, Main Tower Road, 17/2, Block-2, P.E.C.S, Karachi. Tel: (+92 21) 3453008, 34319478 Fax: (+92 21) 3431742 E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com</p>	<p>Lahore P-4, Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore. Tel: (+92 42) 3679881, 36791886 Fax: (+92 42) 3671420 E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com</p>	<p>Peshawar Office No: C-6, 2nd Floor, Zaker Plaza, Lafiq Road, Ring Road, Peshawar. Tel: (+92 91) 2662778 Fax: (+92 91) 2662688 E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com</p>	<p>Kabul House #4, Street #4, Chah-Nawaz Road, Shino-Naw, Kabul - Afghanistan Tel: (+92 9021) 772, 63 7979556, 63 7784828, 63 7784828 E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com</p>
---	---	---	---

National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

- May 03/Poland National Day
- May 06/Bulgaria Armed Forces Day
- May 06/UAE Armed Forces Day
- May 07/Kazakhstan Armed Forces Day
- May 08/Czech Republic National Day
- May 09/European Union National Day
- May 17/Norway Constitution Day
- May 21/Hungary Armed Forces Day
- May 22/Yemen Republic Re-unification Day(National Day)
- May 24/Eritrea National Day
- May 25/Lebanon Liberation and Resistance Day
- May 25/Argentina National Day
- May 25/Jordan Independence Day
- May 28 /Azerbaijan Republic Day
- May 28/Ethiopia National Day
- May 31/Brunei Armed Forces Day

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police...9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange 9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi..5555489

CAA.....9281022

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....5611116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi and Assistant Secretary US embassy Pakistan, S. Paul Kapur, inaugurate special exhibition titled "Legacy Returns Home"

Economists are architects of national policy building

Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Chief Economist at the Ministry of Planning, told the officers that throughout a career, a person is recognized by the quality and sincerity of their work. He urged each participant to leave every position better than they found it, a standard that he said is the true measure of public service

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) hosted a Certificate Awarding Ceremony today to mark the completion of the "6-Week Induction Training Programme for Research Officers (Economist Group)" of the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Honorable Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and distributed certificates to the newly inducted officers at PIDE's Junior Combination Room, Islamabad. In his keynote address, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal described the Ministry of Planning as the "development brain" of the government and urged the new cohort to see themselves

as architects of nation-building, not just routine functionaries. He encouraged them to make a difference in policy making, he mentioned that Pakistan was once considered champion of reforms but due to frequent policy reversals and political regime changes allowed its neighbors to surpass it economically. He highlighted that Pakistan's policy culture needs professionals who can implement practical policy solutions. Declaring that humanity has entered a "techno-economy era" driven by artificial intelligence, he warned that changes now occur within months, not decades. Economists who remain anchored in industrial-era frameworks, he cautioned, will be left behind. The Federal Minister called on the officers to master technology economics, digital economics, environmental economics, and behavioral economics, in addition

to traditional economic tools. He urged the officers not to manipulate data under political pressure, describing it as the "fuel of future development." He reminded them that every economic indicator has a human cost: inflation is not just a percentage on a chart, but families struggling to afford food; a growth slowdown is not just a statistic, but unemployment and hopelessness for youth. Dr. Nadeem Javid, Vice Chancellor of PIDE, reiterated that economists are crucial for economic policy making because each number and statistic has a story behind it, knowing the people of the country is important for every economist. He further emphasized that the newly inducted research officers should be aware of the invisible "status quo forces" embedded in institutions that systematically resist change.

He argued that competence without courage is insufficient: officers must be willing to voice dissenting analysis in policy meetings and respectfully challenge ineffective practices, even before senior colleagues. Warning against the professional drift, by which talented officers gradually become captured by routine and bureaucratic inertia, he urged the cohort to remain intellectually restless. In the new global competition, he noted, nations win through the quality of their ideas and institutions. Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Chief Economist at the Ministry of Planning, told the officers that throughout a career, a person is recognized by the quality and sincerity of their work. He urged each participant to leave every position better than they found it, a standard that he said is the true measure of public service.

Nationwide Hepatitis C control campaign launched

ISLAMABAD: The government has formally initiated a nationwide campaign against Hepatitis C, one of the country's most serious public health challenges. Addressing the soft-launch ceremony, Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal termed the Prime Minister's Hepatitis C Elimination Programme a historic and revolutionary step towards building a healthier Pakistan. He said that this Rs 67 billion programme was among the largest public health initiatives undertaken in Pakistan and marked the culmination of nearly a decade of efforts to combat Hepatitis C. He highlighted the growing disease burden, stating that nearly 10 million Pakistanis are affected by Hepatitis C out of

around 60 million patients worldwide. He added that almost 80 percent of infected individuals remain unaware of their condition, leading to continued transmission of the virus. "Hepatitis C is a dangerous disease that can ultimately lead to liver cancer if left untreated," Mustafa Kamal said, stressing that the country's healthcare system must shift from a sick-care approach to a preventive healthcare model focused on early diagnosis and treatment. The minister announced that nationwide screening would be conducted with the support of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to ensure transparency and maximum outreach. He said that as part of the initial phase,

12 Hepatitis C screening counters have been established at federal hospitals in Islamabad. He urged citizens to participate actively in the screening campaign, saying public cooperation was vital for the programme's success. The minister said the Hepatitis C screening test, which usually costs around Rs7,000, along with a complete three-to-six-month treatment course, would be provided free of cost under the initiative. Referring to Egypt's successful elimination of Hepatitis C through mass screening campaigns, Mustafa Kamal expressed confidence that Pakistan could achieve similar results through collective efforts. "If Egypt can eliminate Hepatitis C, why can't Pakistan.—DNA

Residents urge action against illegal excavation

ISLAMABAD: According to local residents, a housing society is continuously carrying out illegal construction activities in the area. Heavy machinery and excavation work are being used in violation of rules and regulations. Residents state that more than 30 houses in the nearby locality are facing serious danger due to continuous mountain cutting and illegal mining activities. The affected people further stated that despite clear orders from the Government and the Supreme Court regarding restrictions on illegal sale, purchase, and occupation of Shamlat land, the involved groups are openly continuing their activities day and night. It has also been alleged that Group No. 4 and other influential persons are carrying out illegal occupation and excavation work in Mouza J-7 area. Local people have submitted applications and complaints to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chief Minister, Commissioner Rawalpindi—APP

FPCCI, Beijing TDD MoU to boost China-Pakistan trade by \$100m

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Beijing TDD E-Commerce Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of IBI Group. This strategic partnership targets a substantial annual business value of USD 100 million through coordinated trade and investment activities. The MoU was signed by Mr. Tariq Khan Jadoon, Vice President of FPCCI, on behalf of Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of FPCCI & Ms. Liu Junzhai, Director and Senior Vice President of IBI, Founder and CEO of TDD, and Chairwoman of YDD, LLDD, NEDD, and CNAUTO. The signing ceremony was held in the presence of honorable Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for the Board of Investment Mr. Qaisar Ahmed Sheikh, Federal Minister for IT & Telecommunications, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and Advisor to the Prime Minister on Industry and Production Mr. Haroon Akhtar, H.E. Khalil Hashmi, Ambassador of Pakistan to China. At the Occasion Mr. Karim Aziz Malik Incharge FPCCI Capital Office, Chairman, Mr. Malik Sohail Hussain Chairman Coordination Capital Office, Mian Zahid Hussain, Chairman, Policy Advisory Board, Mr. Shukat Usman President Rawalpindi Chamber, Mr. Sohail Altaf Group Leader RCCI, Ms. Samina Fazil President Islamabad Woman Chamber, Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, President of Markazi Anjuman Tajran Punjab and Rawalpindi, Sardar Saqib Naseem, President Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries, Dost Ali Jan, Senior Vice President, Asif Javed, Vice President RCSTSI and other prominent members of FPCCI. Under the terms of the MoU, IBI Group and FPCCI will jointly promote bilateral trade across ten key industrial sectors. These priority areas include Renewable Energy, IT and Digital Services, Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals, Automotive/EVs, Textiles, and Engineering. The collaboration aims to strengthen economic ties and through intensive B2B matchmaking and industrial cooperation.



Ayaz urges lawmakers to adopt paperless system

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Wednesday urged members to bring their iPads to the House, as only a limited number of printed copies would be available for those who require them. Speaking in the National Assembly, he said members had been provided with iPads and that printed agendas would no longer be placed before lawmakers from the next day. He said the move was part of efforts to shift towards a paperless system, noting that printed material often goes to waste. "We are moving towards a more future-oriented, paperless system. Please bring your iPads with you, and we will reduce the use of paper," he added.—APP

RCCI Inks MoU with China's IBI Group

The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China's IBI Group during the IBI Pakistan Digital Economy HQ Official Launch Ceremony held in Islamabad. The MoU was signed by RCCI President Usman Shukat, who also exchanged the MoU documents with representatives of IBI Group. RCCI Group Leader Sohail Altaf witnessed the signing ceremony. The agreement aims to strengthen strategic cooperation in industrial digitalization, e-commerce, smart manufacturing, logistics support, and industrial development by leveraging IBI Group's expertise and creating new opportunities for joint ventures between RCCI Industrial Estate Rawat and IBI Group.—APP

Maritime Minister reviews ports' readiness

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry chaired a high-level meeting to assess ports' preparedness amid the evolving regional situation and devise strategies to position Pakistani ports as a premier regional transit and transshipment hub. The meeting brought together major stakeholders, including shipping lines and terminal operators, to ensure seamless maritime trade, boost operational efficiency, enhance feeder connectivity, and streamline business procedures, says a press release received here on Wednesday. Discussions covered regulatory challenges, digitization, stakeholder coordination, and opportunities to attract regional cargo, with emphasis on promoting Karachi as a reliable maritime gateway.—APP

Briefs

Noor murder case hearing adjourned

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday adjourned the hearing of the Noor Muqaddam murder case till the first week of June.

A three-member bench headed by Justice Hashim Kharal heard the case. During the proceedings, the court directed that the matter be fixed for hearing in the first week of June after Eid, observing that the case was lengthy and required dedicated time for hearing. The court further instructed the staff not to schedule any other criminal case on the day fixed for the Noor Muqaddam murder case so that uninterrupted and focused proceedings could be conducted. During the hearing, counsel for the accused, Zahir Jaffer, Khawaja Haris appeared before the court.—APP

Police bust alleged illegal network

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested 10 suspects, including a former police official, during a raid at a private spa in a private housing society over alleged illegal and immoral activities. An official told APP on Wednesday that Lohi Bher police conducted the raid at a spa located in the Civic Center area of the private housing society after receiving credible information regarding unlawful activities at the premises. He said a police team, accompanied by lady constables, carried out the operation and took several suspects into custody. The official said the arrested accused included former police official Irfan Ullah alias "Langra", another suspect identified as Rizwan Abid, and eight women belonging to different cities. He said during initial investigation, disclosures related to alleged human trafficking and organized criminal activities also surfaced.

According to the official, police registered a case at Lohi Bher police station under FIR No. 309/26 under sections 294 and 188 PPC along with provisions of the Human Trafficking Act (HTA-3). He said police are also investigating possible links of the network with narcotics supply, including Ice and other intoxicants. The official said raids were underway to arrest absconding suspect Hammad and other facilitators linked to the network.—APP

Students competition honours armed forces

RAWALPINDI: Students from across the region participated in a patriotic youth festival on Wednesday, featuring speech, tableau, and national song competitions.

The event, hosted by the Punjab Council of the Arts in collaboration with the All Pakistan Private Schools Management Association (APPSMA), aimed to foster national unity and positive thinking among the younger generation. Shazia Rizwan, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Culture Punjab, during her address as chief guest emphasized the importance of such cultural platforms in nurturing talent and strengthening national identity. "The youth are the cornerstone of our society", she said while praising the creative skills displayed by students from various private educational institutions. She also paid tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces, saying that the military remains a symbol of national security and defense. She referenced the bravery and professional competence of the army, stating the nation stands side-by-side with its troops during challenging times. The ceremony concluded with the distribution of prizes and certificates to students who demonstrated outstanding performance in their respective categories.—APP

Gilani fetes Belgian Royals visiting Pakistan

He said that European countries highly value Pakistan's constructive role in advancing international peace and expressed hope that Pakistan's diplomatic efforts would contribute towards preventing wider global conflicts and promoting international stability

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

Islamabad: Chairman Senate of Pakistan Yousaf Raza Gilani hosted a reception in Islamabad in honour of His Highness Prince Édouard de Ligne La Trémoille and Her Highness Princess Isabella Orsini de Ligne La Trémoille of the Belgian Royal Family during their visit to Pakistan. The reception was attended by Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Deputy Chairman Senate Syedal Khan Nasar, Members of the National Assembly Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani, Syed Ali Qasim Gilani, Alauddin Junejo and Sharmila Paruqi, Deputy Chief of Mission of the United States to Pakistan Natalie Baker, Amir Sheikh of the Pakistani diaspora in Europe, parliamentarians, diplomats and other distinguished guests. Welcoming the esteemed royal guests to Islamabad, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said it was a matter of great honour for Pakistan to host distinguished members of the Belgian Royal Family. He remarked that the visit was not merely a reflection of diplomatic engagement, but also a symbol of friendship, goodwill and mutual respect between the peoples of Pakistan and Belgium. He stated that the Belgian Royal Family is regarded among Europe's oldest and most respected royal houses, adding that the visit of the royal guests would further strengthen the message of friendship and goodwill between the two countries. He noted that Pakistan greatly values Belgium as a trusted friend and an important partner within the European Union. Emphasising the importance of people-to-people contacts, the Chairman Senate observed that enduring relations between nations are built not only through agreements and institutions, but also through cultural harmony, personal connections and meaningful dialogue. He said the royal delegation's visit represented an excellent example of diplomacy founded on mutual respect, trust



and shared values. Referring to Pakistan's ancient civilisation, cultural diversity and traditions of hospitality, he expressed hope that the distinguished guests would experience firsthand the warmth, sincerity and affection of the people of Pakistan. Speaking on bilateral relations, Chairman Senate Gilani said that ties between Pakistan and Belgium are based on decades of trust, constructive cooperation and international collaboration. He highlighted that cooperation between the two countries continues to grow in diverse fields including trade, parliamentary exchanges, education, culture and development partnership. He further stated that although Pakistan and Belgium are geographically distant, both countries share a common belief in dialogue, peace,

democratic values and collective prosperity. Appreciating Belgium's support for Pakistan under the GSP Plus framework, he said the cooperation had further strengthened economic relations between Pakistan and the European Union. Referring to global challenges, the Chairman Senate said issues such as climate change, economic uncertainty, peace and social cohesion require collective wisdom and stronger international cooperation. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace, stability and international harmony in the region and beyond. As the founding Chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani expressed his desire to further strengthen parliamentary diplomacy and welcomed enhanced interaction between the parlia-

ments of Pakistan and Belgium.

Concluding his address, the Chairman Senate dedicated the evening to the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Belgium and conveyed his best wishes for stronger relations, lasting peace and deeper cooperation between the two countries.

The Belgian Prince while addressing the participants thanked Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani for the warm and gracious reception and appreciated Pakistan's efforts for the promotion of global peace. He said that European countries highly value Pakistan's constructive role in advancing international peace and expressed hope that Pakistan's diplomatic efforts would contribute towards preventing wider global conflicts and promoting international stability.

Pak, Sino discuss trade expansion

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Wednesday held a detailed and wide-ranging meeting with Chinese Minister Counsellor Mr. Yang Guangyuan to discuss strengthening bilateral trade, industrial cooperation, agriculture modernization, logistics connectivity and supply chain resilience. The meeting reflected the deep-rooted friendship and enduring strategic partnership between Pakistan and China, with both sides reaffirming their shared commitment to expanding practical economic cooperation across multiple sectors, said a release issued here. Both sides negotiated on emerging investment opportunities under the broader framework of Pakistan-China strategic economic partnership. During the discussion, Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan highlighted the evolving global trade environment, noting that recent geopolitical developments, supply chain disruptions, and changing logistics dynamics have reinforced the importance of resilient regional trade corridors and diversified industrial cooperation. He observed that disruptions in global shipping routes and supply chains have prompted businesses worldwide to reassess production and logistics strategies, creating fresh opportunities for countries with a strategic geographic advantage. The Minister emphasized that Pakistan's location positions it as a natural gateway connecting China, Central Asia, the Middle East, and emerging markets, making it a strategically important partner for regional trade and manufacturing collaboration. A major focus of the discussion remained Pakistan-China industrial cooperation, particularly in electric vehicles (EVs), renewable energy, battery manufacturing, and advanced industrial technologies. Jam Kamal Khan noted that Chinese automotive brands have already established a growing presence in Pakistan through assembly operations, while the next phase should focus on deeper industrial collaboration, localization, technology transfer, and joint ventures in EV manufacturing and related components. He said Pakistan's auto sector has developed a domestic vendor ecosystem over time, but EV technology presents an opportunity to create entirely new industrial capabilities, including batteries, electric motors, electronics, and advanced component manufacturing. The Minister stressed that Pakistan offers not only a growing domestic market but also significant export potential for regional and African markets. The Chinese side appreciated Pakistan's interest in expanding industrial cooperation and acknowledged the strong participation of Pakistani companies in ongoing business engagements, particularly in emerging sectors such as IT, EVs, energy technologies, and manufacturing.—DNA

90,000 Pakistanis visited Azerbaijan last year

ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, on Wednesday said around 90,000 Pakistanis visited Azerbaijan last year, reflecting growing people-to-people contacts and expanding tourism ties between the two countries. The ambassador shared these figures during a meeting with Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Musadik Masood Malik in Islamabad, where both sides discussed bilateral relations, tourism cooperation, regional connectivity and opportunities for joint ventures. During the meeting, it was shared that approximately 120,000 Pakistani citizens were granted e-visas and ASAN visas for Azerbaijan last year, out of which around 90,000 Pakistanis travelled to the country. Both sides discussed enhancing flight connectivity between Pakistan and Azerbaijan in view of increasing travel demand and growing exchanges between the people of the two countries. Ambassador Khazar Farhadov said Pakistan possessed immense tourism potential due to its diverse landscapes, beaches, mountains and natural beauty. Dr. Musadik Malik observed that Pakistan could benefit from Azerbaijan's experience in developing the tourism sector and said the promotion of tourism and related industries could create millions of employment opportunities for Pakistani youth.—DNA

Urumqi, Peshawar celebrate 41 years of sister city ties

ISLAMABAD: Urumqi and Peshawar celebrated the 41st anniversary of their sister-city relationship, with representatives from both sides gathering to renew friendship and explore cooperation. This year marks the 75th anniversary of China-Pakistan diplomatic relations. According to China Economic Net on Wednesday, in 1985, Urumqi and Peshawar officially became international sister cities—the first of their kind in Xinjiang—opening a new chapter for Urumqi's foreign exchanges and cooperation. Yakup Paydulla, mayor of Urumqi, noted in his address that since the establishment of the sister-city relationship, the two sides have carried out productive cooperation in government-to-government exchanges, friendly delegation visits, economic and trade fairs (such as the Urumqi Trade Fair and the Eurasia Commodities Trade Expo), cultural exchange, and language learning. These efforts, he said, have continuously deepened the friendship between the two cities. Looking ahead, the mayor said the two cities enjoy broad prospects for cooperation. Urumqi stands ready to work with Peshawar to continuously advance mutual visits between government bodies, parliaments and goodwill delegations. It will also deepen pragmatic cooperation in

key areas such as economy and trade, agricultural science and technology, infrastructure, energy and people's livelihoods, so that the outcomes of friendship and cooperation can better benefit people on both sides. Babar Saleem Swati, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan, said in his speech that China-Pakistan friendship is rooted in history, mutual trust and respect. Regions of the two countries have long been closely linked via the ancient Silk Road, which has served as a bridge for cultural exchanges and economic development. He expressed the hope that Peshawar and Urumqi will take this event as an opportunity to carry forward their tradition of friendship, share the responsibility for development, and expand exchanges and cooperation in education, science and technology, culture, agriculture, trade, and other fields—enriching the bilateral relationship with vivid examples of cooperation and contributing to the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future. At the event, representatives from both sides jointly created a calligraphy piece reading "China-Pakistan Friendship Lasts Forever," exchanged commemorative gifts, and watched a cultural performance together.—DNA

Pakistani Ph.D. student in China advances research on early cancer detection

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Majid, born into a humble family in Fatomand in Gujranwala, found his life calling during his Ph.D. journey at Tianjin University, China. In a recent breakthrough, his review article titled "Aptamer-based electrochemical biosensors for breast cancer biomarkers: Developments, challenges, and future directions" was published in Analytical Chemistry, one of the world's leading journals in the field. "Saving a life does not begin in an operating room; it begins in a laboratory, with a sensor small enough to detect what the human eye cannot see," he told China Economic Net in an interview. "Field-effect transistor (FET)-based sensors aim at early cancer detection by identifying biomarkers at very early stages," he told China Economic Net reporter in an interview. In simple words, biomarkers are small biological signals the body releases when something is wrong. "If we can detect them early, we can detect cancer early. And early detection changes everything. When cancer is identified at an early stage, treatment success rates increase significantly. Patients can avoid much of the physical and emotional suffering that comes with late-stage therapies. So in many ways, my research is not just about detection, it is about reducing pain," he further explained. Before coming to China

on a Chinese Government Scholarship, he completed his bachelor's degree in chemistry and later ranked among the top five students in master's program. He also highlighted the empowering role of academic exchange in China. "Academic conferences are regularly organized where researchers present their latest work. They pushed me to think more critically, observe how others structure their research questions, and understand new methodologies and problem-solving approaches," he said. "After completing my Ph.D. at Tianjin University, I plan to continue my research in China," he said. "My next goal is to pursue postdoctoral research at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. That environment represents the highest level of scientific rigor and innovation, and I want to refine myself there both technically and intellectually. After that, I aim to join a research institute in China and establish my own laboratory. But not just any laboratory—a multidisciplinary research lab, where one focus is early cancer detection through advanced sensor technologies, and the other is developing treatment strategies. While working in China, I also intend to collaborate closely with research institutes in Pakistan. Together, we can build laboratories that prepare young scientific minds for future biological challenges.—DNA

Riphah varsity wins HEC NRPU research project award

ISLAMABAD: Riphah Institute of Media Sciences has achieved another milestone as its Head of Department, Dr. Muhammad Riaz, has been awarded the prestigious Higher Education Commission (HEC) National Research Program for Universities (NRPU) Project under Call 2025-26. According to Riphah Institute of Media Sciences officials, the awarded research project titled "Designing a Foundational Immersive Media Literacy Framework for Pakistani Youth: A Proactive Approach to Mitigating Risks in AR, VR, and the Metaverse" aims to develop a comprehensive framework to equip Pakistani youth with the skills and awareness required to navigate emerging immersive technologies responsibly, said a press release. The project focuses on addressing potential risks associated with Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and the Metaverse while promoting safe and informed digital engagement among young users. Officials termed the achievement a reflection of Riphah International University's continued commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and impactful research in the fields of media studies and emerging technologies.—APP

President approves civil award for Attock martyr

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday approved the conferment of the civil award "Sitara-e-Shujaat" (posthumous) upon Liaquat Shaheed, who sacrificed his life after he confronted a suicide bomber. The president granted the approval on the recommendation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, according to a President House statement. Liaquat, a resident of the Jand area in District Attock, embraced martyrdom after he intercepted a suspicious individual near the Khushal Garh Bridge. Upon being confronted by Liaquat, the suicide bomber detonated his explosives, resulting in Liaquat's martyrdom. On Tuesday, both President Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz paid tribute to Liaquat Shaheed for his exemplary valor, remembering him as a shining example of national resilience, patriotism and collective awareness against terrorism.—APP

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

MOST EXPERIENCED MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS OF MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS IN PAKISTAN

JUDO
KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO
UNIFORMS AND COLOURED BELTS

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD
127 C, Industrial Estate
Sialkot-51340, Pakistan
Phones: +92-52-3256000 / 3256798
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk

ashraf

UK bracing for yet another political storm

MOHAMED CHEBARO

IS it the end of the road for UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer after the poor performance of his party at last week's local elections? Less than two years ago, Starmer promised to replace the years of Tory turbulence with competence, stability and growth. But it seems today that neither Britain's voters nor many of his ministers and backbench MPs are convinced. Labour under Starmer scored a landslide victory in the July 2024 general election, but his leadership style and lack of charisma have not cut it with an impatient electorate that desires instant and radical change. Last week's elections delivered a double blow: both to Starmer and the long-established political duopoly that has led the country for the past 100 years. Starmer might even prove to be the last leader to win a general election with an outright majority, as the electorate is showing further evidence of splintering in search of smaller parties.

It was long thought that the UK's electoral system was more immune to populism than most, but last week's results showed that British voters are drifting toward the extremes – on the right, Reform UK and its anti-Europe, anti-immigrant populism, and, on the left, the Green Party with its new eco-populism. Their current share of support, if translated into a parliamentary election, would mean the end for Britain's two-party system dominated by Labour and the Conservatives. The UK, like elsewhere, should be craving stability and survival amid a complex geopolitical landscape.

This would not be good news for Starmer, the people or the political system. The UK, like elsewhere, should be craving stability and survival amid a complex geopolitical landscape. There is no time for internal strife and party-political warfare on top of the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, which came after the difficult years of the pandemic, and the recent unprecedented strangling of the world's economy by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Domestically, societies everywhere are reeling under the pressures of the rising cost of living, increased insecurity and weaponized migration, which are further polarizing populations. The financial problems Labour inherited have limited the government's maneuverability and added to Starmer's woes thanks to higher-than-ever care costs and rising health and welfare bills. Time is running out for Starmer. But also for the UK's historic two-party system. Starmer's efforts to steady the ship ahead of Wednesday's crucial king's speech – the address that sets out the government's priorities for the year ahead – is unlikely to change much. Even a reversal of Brexit might not deliver the shock needed to make voters

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 188

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394

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



rethink. Starmer was never a great orator, let alone a charismatic leader, but he was chosen to turn things around for the country after the turbulent Tory years, with the likes of Boris Johnson collapsing trust in politics and Liz Truss nearly collapsing the economy.

There is a norm in the UK that political earthquakes are saved for general elections and that local elections do not bring down prime ministers. But times have changed and maybe the voters are now ready to do away with the century-old Labour-Conservative duopoly. Last week's elections delivered change for scores of councils in England and the parliaments of Scotland and Wales. In Scotland, Labour's weakness enabled the Scottish National Party to extend its 19 years as head of the devolved government in Edinburgh. And Labour lost control of the Welsh Senedd for the first time since devolution took effect in 1999. Times have changed and maybe the voters are now ready to do away with the Labour-Conservative duopoly.

However, it is Reform UK's results that will cause the most consternation and have the greatest adverse impact on the country's political landscape going forward. Its overall share of the vote remained stable at about 20 percent and that is a grave concern. But its path to power will remain uncertain unless it starts scoring vote shares in the mid-to-high 30s. But the danger from the populism of Reform is that it is clawing support from both an effectively defunct Conservative Party and the Labour heartland known as the "red wall," where voters are disappointed by this government's performance. Meanwhile, the Greens and the Liberal Democrats are taking progressive votes away from Labour in key cities and counties like never before.

Yes, there may be many reasons to question Starmer, from his ambiguous approach to key questions to his failure to make the moral case for socialism, as well as his failure to clean up politics. All that against the backdrop of a continued rise in the cost of living. Even his opposition to the US' war with Iran did not help him, after the so-called abdication of his moral authority in the eyes of some traditional Labour supporters concerning Gaza.

The rancor and hatred for him, however, is alarming and reflects an electorate that is more polarized, impatient and unreasonable than ever. Many believe it is reflective of the political moment, with public opinion magnified by a tech realm that delivers digital consensus over single issues that are then adopted as a trend. It is scary how a negative view of Starmer is shared on both the right and the left, and with equally toxic fervor. One wonders, after scrolling through social media feeds, if Starmer's premiership can be saved. He is maybe a leader for another age and, regardless of how well he delivers on stability and growth for the nation, it will not be enough. Once judged in the current court of social media-driven public opinion, there is no going back and Britain should brace itself for yet another period of political instability. His demise as PM could also spell the end of the historic Labour-Conservative duopoly, which has been a steady hand on the tiller for the UK for many years.

Iran's Digital Leverage to Black Out the Globe

Qamar Bashir



Iran's strategic posture has evolved dramatically during this conflict. Initially, Tehran refused discussions on nuclear limitations, missile restrictions, or reopening Hormuz until hostilities ceased permanently and reparations for infrastructure damage, assassinated leadership figures, and civilian casualties were addressed. Iran's leadership appears convinced that the closure of Hormuz – and the fear surrounding it – forced the world to recognize the limits of American and Israeli power projection. Now Tehran possesses another negotiating card: the digital cables

WHEN President Donald Trump warned that the United States could "destroy the civilization of Iran," few in Washington imagined that Iran would respond not merely with missiles, drones, or naval blockades, but by exposing a terrifying reality to the world: modern civilization does not only run on oil. It runs on data. And much of that data passes through the same narrow waterway that carries the world's energy lifeline – the Strait of Hormuz. For decades, the Strait of Hormuz was viewed primarily as the world's most critical oil chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea. Every crisis in the region triggered fears of soaring fuel prices, economic collapse, and shipping paralysis. But the 2026 Iran-USA-Israel conflict has revealed something even more consequential hidden beneath those waters: the digital nervous system of the modern world.

Beneath the seabed of Hormuz lie at least seven major undersea fiber-optic cable systems, including FALCON, AAE-1, TGN-Gulf, and several Asia-Europe communication routes. These cables carry enormous volumes of global internet traffic, cloud computing operations, banking transactions, military communications, GPS synchronization signals, AI data flows, financial clearing systems, media broadcasts, and commercial operations linking Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and beyond. These are not ordinary cables. They are the arteries of modern civilization.

More than 95 percent of international internet traffic travels through undersea fiber-optic networks. Gulf nations such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain rely heavily on these cables for everything from oil trading and banking to aviation control and national security communications. India depends on these routes for connectivity to Europe and the Middle East. Global tech giants such as Google, Meta, Amazon, and Microsoft either own, lease, or operate major portions of the world's subsea cable infrastructure. In reality, the modern internet is not floating in the clouds. It lies vulnerable at the bottom of the ocean. Iran recognizes this vulnerability and is keeping the option open to impose licensing fees, regulations, and even operational control over the fiber-optic cables passing through Hormuz. Tehran has reportedly explored legal mechanisms to treat the underwater infrastructure as part of Iran's sovereign jurisdiction within the strait. While the world initially dismissed these statements as propaganda, the strategic implications are staggering. The closure or disruption of the Strait of Hormuz already pushed oil prices sharply upward, increasing fuel costs for ordinary Americans and consumers worldwide. Many households experienced thousands of dollars in additional annual expenses due to inflation, rising transportation costs, food prices, and

energy shocks. But a disruption of the digital cables beneath Hormuz would unleash a crisis far beyond inflation. It would paralyze civilization itself.

The modern financial system depends on millisecond communication between banks, stock exchanges, SWIFT systems, trading platforms, and cloud servers. Trillions of dollars in financial transactions pass daily through these networks. A major cable disruption could halt real-time banking operations, freeze financial markets, delay international transfers, and disrupt payment systems globally. The consequences would not stop there. Commercial aviation relies heavily on digital communication networks for navigation, weather coordination, GPS synchronization, and air traffic management. Shipping industries use constant data exchanges for cargo tracking, maritime safety, navigation routing, and port logistics. Modern agriculture depends on satellite-linked irrigation systems, weather forecasting, fertilizer supply coordination, commodity exchanges, and precision farming technologies. Hospitals rely on cloud databases and communication systems. Governments rely on encrypted defense communications. Artificial intelligence systems depend on uninterrupted data exchange between global data centers.

If these cables were severely disrupted, much of the modern world could slow to a standstill within hours. Even temporary outages are catastrophically expensive. Studies estimate that major internet disruptions can cost millions of dollars per hour. IT outages alone can cost corporations over \$33,000 per minute. Repairing damaged subsea cables can cost between \$1.5 million and \$8 million depending on the scale of the disruption. But the indirect economic losses are far greater – potentially reaching hundreds of billions or even trillions of dollars if outages persist.

The world received a warning in 2006 when an earthquake damaged nine undersea cables near Taiwan. Connectivity disruptions lasted for weeks across parts of Asia, affecting banking systems, communications, and trade flows. Eleven repair ships required nearly 50 days to fully restore operations. Now imagine a deliberate geopolitical confrontation centered around Hormuz. Unlike oil tankers, these cables cannot easily be replaced or rerouted overnight. They lie in shallow, vulnerable seabeds where anchors, sabotage operations, or military activity can sever them. Even a few coordinated disruptions could force global internet traffic into severe congestion, creating massive latency, communication failures, and digital blackouts. This is why Iran's leverage now extends beyond missiles and naval power.

For the first time in modern history, a regional power has demonstrated the ability to influence both the world's energy bloodstream and its digital nervous system simultaneously. Iran's strategic posture has

evolved dramatically during this conflict. Initially, Tehran refused discussions on nuclear limitations, missile restrictions, or reopening Hormuz until hostilities ceased permanently and reparations for infrastructure damage, assassinated leadership figures, and civilian casualties were addressed. Iran's leadership appears convinced that the closure of Hormuz – and the fear surrounding it – forced the world to recognize the limits of American and Israeli power projection. Now Tehran possesses another negotiating card: the digital cables. The implications for the United States are profound. American military power depends heavily on global communication networks. Command-and-control systems, intelligence sharing, satellite synchronization, drone operations, logistics coordination, and cloud-based defense infrastructure all rely on resilient international data routes. If Iran can influence, disrupt, or regulate these networks near Hormuz, it creates a new layer of strategic vulnerability for Washington.

Even more alarming for Western policymakers is that disruption can occur through hybrid warfare methods. A cable cut caused by "accidental" anchor dragging or proxy sabotage creates plausible deniability while still inflicting enormous damage. Such attacks are harder to deter than conventional missile strikes. This is why President Trump's upcoming visit to China carries extraordinary significance. Beyond discussions about trade, tariffs, and geopolitics, one of the most urgent priorities will likely involve restoring stability to the Strait of Hormuz and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of both energy and digital communications. The reality now confronting the world is sobering. Oil was once considered the single jugular vein of modern civilization. But the 2026 conflict has exposed a second jugular vein hidden beneath the oceans: the global fiber-optic communication network. Together, these two systems power the modern world. And today, Iran sits astride both.

Whether Tehran ultimately uses this leverage for negotiation, deterrence, or economic pressure remains uncertain. What is certain is that the world has entered a new era where wars are no longer fought only with bombs, tanks, and missiles. They are fought through shipping lanes, data cables, cloud infrastructure, financial networks, and communication systems that sustain every aspect of modern life. If these systems collapse simultaneously, humanity would not simply face recession or inflation. Large parts of civilization could be pushed temporarily into digital darkness – a modern form of the Stone Age in the age of artificial intelligence.

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

Why Pakistan Needs a Mandated Framework

Dr. Jam Muhammad Zafar

Contrast this with the ground reality in Pakistan. While isolated examples like NUST's Corporate Advisory Council (CAC) show genuine promise by engaging industrial giants, they remain the exception rather than the rule. Most of our public and private universities operate in an institutional silo, physically and intellectually disconnected from the industrial estates in their proximity. There is currently no legal framework mandating that an industrial zone in Faisalabad, Sialkot, or Karachi be tethered...

FOR Pakistan's higher education sector, we stand at a precipice of paradox. Our universities produce a deluge of research scholars and project proposals, yet our national innovation quotient remains stagnant. Graduates leave campuses with degrees, but often without the practical know-how that industries desperately need. The critical bottleneck is the absence of a prescribed, legally-binding framework for academia-industry linkage. For faculty members and research supervisors, the mandate to secure "industrial support letters" for national and international funding is becoming a Sisyphean task, creating an eligibility paradox where brilliant ideas die on the vine simply because they lack an industrial co-signature.

The current demand from funding forums for industrial linkage is intellectually sound—it ensures market relevance—but the implementation is deeply flawed. We are asking our scholars to build bridges without giving them a blueprint or raw materials. This well-intentioned requirement has reduced a vital knowledge transfer process into a mere exercise in paperwork, where faculty scramble for transactional letters of support rather than engaging in deep, symbiotic research collaboration. Consequently, promising research remains confined to library shelves instead of reaching factory floors where it can create impact and jobs. Globally, this chasm has been replaced by structured innovation ecosystems. In the United States, the "University Innovation Alliance" and specialized centers like Virginia's CCALS (Commonwealth Center for Advanced Logistics Systems) function as neutral collaboration engines. They pool resources from multiple universities and industries to solve real-world logistics and technology problems. These centers operate on what experts call a quadruple-helix model—uniting

academia, industry, government, and civil society. This ensures that research is not only academically rigorous but also commercially viable from its very inception. The industry does not wait for the finished product; it invests in the process from day one. Similarly, Germany's renowned "Bayreuth Model" rejects superficial industrial meet-and-greets in favor of co-innovation partnerships. In this system, companies don't just visit campuses for job fairs; they co-design curricula and co-fund laboratories to solve specific manufacturing challenges. A professor working on automotive engineering doesn't just publish a paper; he or she works inside a factory to troubleshoot a production bottleneck. This represents a shift from superficial exchange to deep technology scouting and implementation science. In Sweden, the model goes even further by integrating research into undergraduate education from the very first year. Students work on real company problems as part of their coursework, ensuring that the workforce is industry-ready upon graduation, possessing not just theoretical book knowledge but practical procedural competencies.

Contrast this with the ground reality in Pakistan. While isolated examples like NUST's Corporate Advisory Council (CAC) show genuine promise by engaging industrial giants, they remain the exception rather than the rule. Most of our public and private universities operate in an institutional silo, physically and intellectually disconnected from the industrial estates in their proximity. There is currently no legal framework mandating that an industrial zone in Faisalabad, Sialkot, or Karachi be tethered to a local university for research and development. This disconnect leads to a tragic resource underutilization on both sides. Industry struggles

with problems that academia could solve, and academia produces research that nobody needs. Furthermore, this gap places an unfair burden on early-career researchers and PhD scholars. For them, securing an industrial support letter is often harder than conducting the actual research. Industrialists, already burdened with daily business challenges, see little incentive to engage with universities due to a lack of tax benefits or a clear legal structure for collaboration. The result is a trust deficit where both parties view each other with suspicion rather than as partners in national progress.

Therefore, I call upon the Federal Ministry, the Chairman HEC, and our nation's Vice Chancellors to move beyond anecdotal encouragement and legislate for a structured interface. We do not need more seminars on collaboration; we need a prescribed framework—a "National Academia-Industry Nexus Policy"—that mandates the creation of Bridging Institutions or Corporate Advisory Councils at every public university.

This policy must be supported by tangible tax incentives for industrial partners who invest in university research. It must also facilitate fluid personnel exchange; for example, allowing faculty to take sabbaticals in industry to work on real problems, while inviting industry experts to serve as adjunct faculty to teach practical skills.

The ultimate goal is to transform our universities from degree-distribution centers into anchor institutions of the national economy. We need to move from an era of begging for support letters to an era of mandated synergy. Let us institutionalize the bridge so that our scholars can cross it with dignity, not desperation. The time for superficial linkages is over. The time for a structured, legal, and functional partnership is now.

Briefs

PM Shehbaz to undertake China visit

FROM PAGE 01

A day earlier, DPM Dar held a phone call with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, where the two leaders discussed Pakistan's efforts to "facilitate engagement between Iran and the US". PM Shehbaz last visited China in September 2025, where he attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit. The development comes as the US President Donald Trump is also scheduled to visit China from May 13 to May 15. Speaking at the launch ceremony, DPM Ishaq Dar underscored that Pakistan and China were taking "another significant step towards innovation, digital connectivity and the economy of the future as our partnership enters a new phase in the digital age". He noted that with the launch of the centre, Pakistan and China were moving towards "digital transformation, agriculture, disaster management, climate resilience, healthcare, and smart cities". "The emerging Pak-China digital corridor will not only deepen bilateral ties but also create opportunities for the wider global south," he remarked.

PM Shehbaz directs steps for SMEs

FROM PAGE 01

provide easy credit, digital financing, inclusion in the formal economy, and access to export markets for SMEs. He expressed satisfaction with the roadmap prepared by SMEDA and the Ministry of Industries, directing to present an implementation plan with achievable targets within a specified time frame. He directed that processing sectors in agriculture be given the status of SMEs and also welcomed the steps taken for the inclusion of women in small and medium industries. During the briefing by SMEDA, the Ministry of Industries and Production, and the State Bank of Pakistan, it was informed that 48 initiatives were being implemented in eight strategic sectors for the development of SMEs, which would ensure the achievement of growth targets over the next two and four years in phased manner.

Mossad chief, Shin Bet head...

FROM PAGE 01

Israel and the UAE have continued to grow their partnership in the shadow of the Iran war, with United States Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee confirming that Israel sent Iron Dome batteries to the United Arab Emirates to use in defense against Iranian attacks during an interview at a Thursday Tel Aviv University conference. "Can I say a word of appreciation for the United Arab Emirates... they were the first Abraham Accords member," Huckabee said when asked about a potential expansion of the Abraham Accords. "Look at the benefits," he said. "Israel just sent them Iron Dome batteries and personnel to help operate them. How come? Because there's an extraordinary relationship between the UAE and Israel."

US intelligence assesses...

FROM PAGE 01

them with mobile launchers, with the country maintaining roughly 70% of its mobile launcher inventory. The assessments also found that nearly 90% of Iran's underground missile storage and launch facilities nationwide are now "partially or fully operational." White House spokeswoman Olivia Wales was quoted as saying that Iran's government knows that its "current reality is not sustainable" and that anyone who "thinks Iran has reconstituted its military is either delusional or a mouthpiece" for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. Regional tensions have escalated since the US and Israel launched strikes against Iran on Feb. 28, triggering retaliation from Tehran against Israel as well as US allies in the Gulf, along with the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Pakistan showcases its tech-prowess

The Consulate General of Pakistan in Vancouver and the Trade and Investment Wing in Canada are offering on-ground B2B and networking support to the delegation for meetings with the Canadian and other international participants enabling their access to the Pacific Northwest's high-growth tech corridor

DNA

VANCOUVER: Pakistan showcases its tech-prowess at the annual "Web Summit 2026" IT and IT-enabled services exhibition being held in Vancouver, Canada from May 11-14, 2026. Establishing its footprint in the North American technology landscape, Pakistan marked a significant presence at the Web Summit 2026-the second edition of the renowned annual tech conference in Vancouver, bringing together global innovators, investors, and industry leaders. A six-member delegation of premier IT companies is participating in the summit showcasing made-in-Pakistan cutting-edge IT-products.

Sponsored by the Pakistan Software Export Board, the apex body to promote Pakistan's IT industry globally, the Pakistan stall was inaugurated by Consul General Mr. Shahzad Hussain. The Consulate General of Pakistan in Vancouver and the Trade and Investment Wing in Canada are offering on-ground B2B and networking support to the delegation for meetings with the Canadian and other international



participants enabling their access to the Pacific Northwest's high-growth tech corridor. The Pakistan delegation is focused on making new business

deals and JVs in AI, FinTech and SaaS in British Columbia, across Canada and with other counterparts. Pakistani IT sector's active participation is

a manifestation of the government's ongoing efforts to expose the fast growing Pakistani tech entrepreneurs to the thriving North American IT-ecosystem

and beyond. Pakistan's IT-exports to Canada alone valued US\$117million, a 21% increase in FY2025 when compared to US\$96.5million in FY2024.

Anita Khawaja of Sialkot awarded with German Federal Order of Merit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mrs. Anita Khawaja, German citizen and resident of Sialkot, has been awarded the Cross of Merit (1st Class) of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Mrs. Khawaja, widow of the late Muhammad Anwar Khawaja, the Founder of Anwar Khawaja Industries, is decorated in recognition of her life-long commitment to improving the healthcare and education of football stitchers and other residents of Sialkot. During a reception in Mrs. Khawaja's honour, the medal of the Cross of Merit (1st Class) was handed over to her by Germany's Ambassador to Pakistan, H. E. Ina Lepel. The event was attended by Mrs. Khawaja's family and friends, other bearers of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany living in Pakistan and by representatives of the national press. Born in Germany's cap-



ital Berlin in 1941, Mrs. Anita Khawaja (née Bade) first came to Pakistan through the "Dienst in Übersee" programme ("Service Abroad") as a young nurse in 1971 to train midwives at the Christian Memorial Hospital and later also traditional birth attendants, thereby helping to substantially reduce infant and maternal mortality in the Sialkot District. After a brief stay in Europe, she married the late Muhammad Anwar Khawaja in 1975 and continued her work for disadvantaged citizens. In 1982,

Mrs. Khawaja set up an Under-Five Healthcare Clinic at the Bethania Hospital for the prevention of malnutrition, critical for the healthy development of children. She worked there until 1986. Simultaneously, Mrs. Khawaja was appointed as a social worker for the women of the District Jail. In 1996, Anwar Khawaja Industries requested Mrs. Anita Khawaja to develop their corporate social responsibility programme. Thanks to the Select Anwar Khawaja Industries Health and Education Programme (SAHEP), tens of thousands of workers (mostly women) and their families have gained access to free healthcare and education (including adult literacy). Targeting education to each child's individual needs has significantly contributed to reducing child labour. Mrs. Anita Khawaja continues to preside SAHEP to this day. Her tireless efforts to improve the lives of the workers and of the people of Sialkot continue.

IHC orders charge of NIRC Chairman to be given to senior member

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Wednesday directed the federal government to give the charge of Chairman of the National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC) to the senior member of the commission until a permanent chairman is appointed. A single bench of Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan heard a petition filed by Umer Baloch regarding the non-appointment of the NIRC Chairman. Additional Attorney General Rashid Hafeez and the petitioners' counsel Shoaib Shaheen appeared before the court. The Additional Attorney General informed the court that the summary for the appointment of the NIRC Chairman had been forwarded and the matter was under consideration. He requested the court to grant two weeks' time for the appointment. The court remarked that the position had been vacant since May 1, and now two more weeks were being sought. Justice Khan inquired why the summary did not state that the senior member should be given the charge of acting chairman until a new appointment was made. Shoaib Shaheen argued that without a chairman, benches could not be constituted and the NIRC had become non-functional. He informed the court that workers' cases from across Pakistan are pending before the NIRC, and the lack of a chairman and members was a serious issue. The IHC directed the government to give the charge of acting chairman to the senior member of NIRC by Monday and adjourned further proceedings until then. - APP

'Imran Khan loses vision in one eye'

FROM PAGE 01

intravitreal eye injection at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) on April 28 as part of his ongoing follow-up treatment. The jailed PTI founder was diagnosed with central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO), a serious eye condition, according to a report submitted to the Supreme Court by his lawyer and the court's amicus curiae, Salman Safdar. The condition occurs when the main vein draining blood from the retina becomes blocked and is often associated with cardiovascular risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and heart disease. During today's media talks, Raja alleged that meetings with the PTI founder and his wife, Bushra Bibi, were being restricted and that even court orders regarding visitation rights were not being implemented. "Signatures on vakalatnamas are being blocked, while only selected individuals are allowed to meet him," Raja claimed, adding that the PTI founder's sisters were also not being permitted meetings despite his "serious health condition". The PTI leader further alleged that Bushra Bibi was facing "false cases", including Toshakhana-related references, which he claimed were based on statements of government witnesses. "We have filed petitions in the Supreme Court, but there is no hearing taking place," Raja said, adding that the party had exhausted all legal avenues and would now take its case before the people of Pakistan.

Trump in China for Xi summit...

FROM PAGE 01

which has struggled to get regulatory permission to sell its powerful H200 artificial intelligence chips there. Trump asked Huang at the last minute to join the trip, said a source familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity, and he was spotted boarding Air Force One during a refueling stop in Alaska en route to Beijing. "I will be asking President Xi, a Leader of extraordinary distinction, to 'open up' China so that these brilliant people can work their magic," he said in post on Truth Social, referring to the CEO delegation. "I will make that my very first request." Asked about Trump's post, Guo Jiakun, a spokesperson for China's foreign ministry, said Beijing stands ready to "expand cooperation, manage differences and inject more stability and certainty into the turbulent world". As Trump prepared for the pomp-filled occasion, his trade negotiator Scott Bessent wrapped up three hours of preparatory talks with Chinese officials in South Korea. China's official Xinhua news agency described them as "candid, in-depth and constructive", but officials did not offer any detailed summary.

Russian places former...

FROM PAGE 01

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 until August 2023, since when he has continued to advocate for boosting military support for Kyiv and condemned Russian aggression. The state media reports did not give further details and Wallace did not reply to a request for comment. Last October, a regional Russian lawmaker called for Wallace to be put on Russia's international wanted list over comments he made at the Warsaw Security Forum about Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014. Speaking at the forum in September, Wallace had recommended helping Ukraine carry out a military strike on the bridge which links southern Russia to Crimea. "We have to help Ukraine have the long-range capabilities to make Crimea unviable. We need to choke the life out of Crimea. And if we do that, I think Putin will realize he's got something to lose," he said. "We need to smash the cursed bridge." It is not clear how many foreign officials or public figures are on the Russian Interior Ministry's database of wanted persons. In 2024, independent news outlet Mediazona said the list included dozens of European politicians and officials.

University of Gwadar awards Chinese Scholarships to 39 students

GWADAR: The University of Gwadar has awarded scholarships to 39 students under the second phase of the Chinese Consulate General's Scholarship program, which covers full tuition fees for four years. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Abdul Razzaq Sabir and Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Syed Manzoor Ahmed distributed the award letters during a ceremony held at the university's seminar hall, Gwadar. Addressing the ceremony, Dr. Sabir congratulated the students and urged them to make full use of the opportunity through hard work, discipline and academic excellence. He said such initiatives help remove financial barriers and prepare future leaders who can contribute to the development of Gwadar, Balochistan and Pakistan. He also thanked the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China for its continued support for education in the region, saying the initiative reflected the longstanding partnership and friendship between Pakistan and China. Professor Syed Manzoor Ahmed appreciated Chinese Consul General Yang Yundong for supporting educational development and expressed hope that cooperation and financial assistance for students from Gwadar and Balochistan would continue in the future. - APP

Messi remains MLS's highest-paid player with \$25m salary

Footballer's base salary doubled while deal will see him make \$28.3m in guaranteed compensation, say figures

LOS ANGELES: Lionel Messi remains the highest-paid player in Major League Soccer with an annual base salary of \$25 million - more than twice as much as the next-highest paid player Son Heung-min, the MLS Players Association said Tuesday. The union's latest list of player salaries reflected the contract extension Messi signed with Inter Miami in October which will keep him with the Florida outfit through the 2028 campaign. According to the figures, Messi's base salary has doubled while overall the deal will see him make \$28.3 million in guaranteed compensation. South Korea star Son, the former Tottenham captain who signed with Los Angeles FC last August for a reported MLS record \$26 million transfer fee, has a base salary of \$10.36 million with total guaranteed compensation of \$11.2 million. The salaries do not

include income from endorsement deals, nor does Messi's compensation reflect his option to acquire a stake in the Florida franchise - co-owned by David Beckham - which he joined in 2023. The 38-year-old Messi, who is expected to lead Argentina's World Cup title defence starting next month, has 59 goals in 64 MLS regular-season games with Miami. He led the league with 29 goals last season and was named Most Valuable Player for the second straight season. Messi's Inter Miami and Argentina teammate Rodrigo De Paul is third on the list with \$9.7 million in guaranteed compensation. Mexico's Hirving "Chucky" Lozano is fourth on the list with \$9.3 million despite the fact that he hasn't featured for San Diego since November. Atlanta's Miguel Almiron rounds out the top five with guaranteed compensation of \$7.9 million. - DNA



Kinnaird College Wins Intervarsity Cricket Title

University of Education won the toss and elected to bat first. They could score paltry 35 for 7 in six overs

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT



ISLAMABAD: Kinnaird College for Women emerged as champions of the Lahore Intervarsity League Cricket Tournament after defeating University of Education by nine wickets in the final. University of Education won the toss and elected to bat first. They could score paltry 35 for 7 in six overs. Onky Tehreem played well, scoring 15 runs while no other batter of University of Education could reach the double figures. For KC, Amania Abid claimed three wickets. Chasing the modest target of 36 runs, Kinnaird College reached home safely in 2 overs with one wicket down. Fatima Shahid smashed sparkling 28 runs. Lahore College for Women University secured the third position in the event. The closing ceremony was graced by the Principal Prof. Dr. Iram Anjum, who distributed trophies and medals among the winning teams and players. Distinguished guests present during the ceremony included Vice Principal Dr. Kalsoom Akhtar, Dr. Aiysha Safdar, Academic Dean Social Sciences and Law, Dr. Helen Khokhar, Dean of Intermediate, and Dr. Ammara Rubab, Head of Sports Department. Speaking at the ceremony, Prof. Dr. Iram Anjum appreciated the efforts and performances of all participating teams and encouraged students to actively participate in sports alongside academics. She highlighted the importance of sports in promoting discipline, confidence, teamwork, and healthy competition among youth.

Briefs

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.65 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 278.66. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 279.05 and Rs 279.75, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 1.02 and closed at Rs 326.24 from the previous day's close of Rs 327.26, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.76, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 0.41 and closed at Rs 376.86 compared to the previous day's Rs 376.45. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 01 paisa each to close at Rs 75.86 and Rs 74.26, respectively.—APP

Gold price decreases by Rs 1,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold decreased in the local market on Wednesday, with 24 karat gold per tola falling by Rs 1,100 to settle at Rs 491,362 compared to Rs 492,462 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 943 to Rs 421,263 from Rs 422,206, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went down by Rs 865 to Rs 386,171 against Rs 387,036. In the international market, the price of gold decreased by \$11 to \$4,690 per ounce from \$4,701. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs 231 to Rs 9,139, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs 198 to Rs 7,835. The price of silver in the international market increased by \$2.31 to \$86.55 per ounce.—APP

Data-Driven policymaking key to eco growth: Shaza

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday said Pakistan's ongoing digital transformation under "CPEC 2.0" carries significant potential to expand the national economy through data-driven policymaking, digitisation and growth in e-commerce. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of the IBI Pakistan Digital Economy Headquarters, she said the initiative followed the Prime Minister's visit to China in September last year, which led to consultations with relevant stakeholders and the eventual establishment of the Digital Economy Headquarters at a Special Technology Zone. She said the headquarters was a flagship bilateral initiative aimed at strengthening high-priority economic cooperation between Pakistan and China. Operating under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework, it integrated trade facilitation, investment promotion, supply chain digitisation, SME empowerment and policy dialogue under a unified execution platform. She said Pakistan's engagement with CPEC began in 2013 during the tenure of then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. She added that Pakistan and China have continued to deepen their partnership, with relations now extending beyond traditional diplomatic ties. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, she said, the country has entered a new phase of cooperation focused on improved execution of development initiatives. The minister said discussions on the Digital Economy Headquarters began during the Prime Minister's visit to China last year, where she first engaged with the IBI team.—APP

BOI minister for facilitating Chinese investment in Pak

He emphasized that the success of this venture would serve as a model for other international investors, particularly Chinese enterprises, and would motivate them to explore Pakistan as a preferred investment destination

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Wednesday met Chinese company, Challenge Fashion (Private) Limited delegation and reaffirmed commitment to facilitating Chinese investment in Pakistan. The Challenge Fashion delegation was led by Chairman Mr. Huang, to discuss the progress of the Challenge Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Lahore and explored avenues for further strengthening investment cooperation, said a news release issued here. The meeting was attended by Secretary Board of Investment, Jamil Qureshi, Director General Board of Investment (BOI) Mehmood Tufail, along with other senior officials of the Board of Investment. The Chairman of Challenge Fashion was accompanied by senior members of his delegation, reflecting strong institutional engagement from both sides. The Federal Minister warmly welcomed the delegation and appreciated Challenge Group's continued confidence in Pakistan's economy. He commended their significant investment and ongoing efforts in developing the Challenge Special Economic Zone, terming it a landmark initiative in Pakistan's industrial landscape. The Minister noted that the project, with a proposed investment of USD 150 million, reflected a strong commitment towards export-oriented industrialization, employment generation, and technology transfer. He emphasized that the success of this venture would serve as a model for other international investors, particularly Chinese enterprises, and would motivate them to explore Pakistan as a preferred investment destination. During the meeting, both sides held detailed



discussions on the development status of the SEZ, including progress on infrastructure, utilities, and regulatory facilitation. The Minister acknowledged the tangible progress made so far, including completion of key preliminary works and initiation of construction activities, and assured full government support for timely resolution of outstanding matters. The discussion was

also focused on Special Economic Zones in other countries, particularly Vietnam, where streamlined procedures and investor-friendly policies have contributed to attracting large-scale foreign investment. The Federal Minister highlighted the importance of learning from international best practices and incorporating reforms in Pakistan's regulatory framework to further enhance ease of doing

business. He reiterated the government's commitment to simplifying investment procedures, improving inter-agency coordination, and ensuring a conducive business environment for investors. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh underscored that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the Government of Pakistan was actively pursuing policies aimed at promoting industrial growth.

S Korea weighs phased Hormuz role after US talks

SEOUL: South Korea is reviewing a phased contribution to efforts to ensure safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, Defense Minister Ahn Gyu-back said on Wednesday, signaling support steps short of military participation. Ahn told a press conference with South Korean reporters in Washington that he had conveyed Seoul's position at a meeting with US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth on Monday. "We said at about this level that, fundamentally, we will participate as a responsible member of the international community and that we will review ways to contribute in a phased manner," Ahn said in comments confirmed by Seoul's ministry. Ahn said possible forms of phased support could include expressions of political support, personnel dispatches, information-sharing and the provision of military assets, while stressing that no detailed discussions had taken place on expanding South Korean troop involvement. "There was no deep discussion on something like specifically expanding our military's participation," he said, adding that any decisions would need to follow domestic legal procedures. Wi Sung-lac, South Korea's presidential national security adviser, said at a roundtable with reporters on Wednesday that Seoul is reviewing whether to join the US-led Maritime Freedom Construct to help safeguard the Strait of Hormuz. Attack on South Korean ship The meeting between South Korean and US defense chiefs came a day after Seoul denounced an attack on a South Korean-flagged vessel near the Strait of Hormuz last week. South Korea's presidential office strongly condemned the incident, but said it was still investigating responsibility for the attack. Ahn said he discussed the attack on the cargo ship with US officials, adding that Seoul would decide on any response only after the probe was complete. At the meeting on Monday, Hegseth said Washington expected allies to "stand shoulder-to-shoulder" amid rising global threats, citing US President Donald Trump's authorization of what he called Operation Epic Fury as evidence of the administration's resolve. He praised Seoul's plans to increase defense spending and assume greater responsibility for the security of the Korean Peninsula, calling it an example of alliance burden-sharing. Ahn told reporters Hegseth expressed understanding over South Korea's position on a conditions-based transfer of war-time operational control (OPCON) from the United States, and the goal of completing the transition at an early date. Washington had a "slightly different view" on the OPCON transfer process, Ahn said, adding that Seoul would continue efforts to persuade the United States South Korean President Lee Jae Myung's administration has signaled it aims to finalize the process during his term, which runs through to 2030, once the country meets a set of military capability conditions agreed with Washington. Ahn also said that the two sides exchanged views on other alliance issues including plans to build nuclear-powered submarines. He said there had been no discussion during the talks about a reduction in US forces stationed in South Korea or about the strategic flexibility of US troops stationed in the country.—DNA

Google, Coca-Cola, ExxonMobil join US-Saudi Business Council board

RIYADH: Executives from Alphabet, Coca Cola and BlackRock are among a host of senior leaders joining the expanded board of the US-Saudi Business Council as economic ties deepen between the two countries. Citi, Bank of America and ExxonMobil are also among some of the world's largest financial, industrial and technology companies on the board as Saudi Arabia accelerates efforts to attract foreign investment and deepen private-sector partnerships. The entity will be co-chaired by Lubna Olayan, chair of the corporate board of the Olayan Group, and Jane Fraser, chair and CEO of Citi. The board has also retained long-serving members including Amin Nasser, president and CEO of Aramco; Robert Wilt, CEO of Maaden; Rami Al Turki, president and CEO of Alturki Holding; and Charles Hallab, president and CEO of the US-Saudi Business Council. "This board represents an extraordinary alignment of global leadership at a pivotal moment in the bilateral relationship, one that is consistent with a reinvigorated and reimagined role for the Council in the US-Saudi partnership," said Hallab. He added: "Their collective expertise across areas critical to both economies positions the council to advance bilateral trade, investment, and business collaboration like never before." The new US members include Ruth Porat, president and chief investment officer of Al-

phabet and Google, as well as Larry Fink, chairman and CEO of BlackRock. Brian Moynihan, chairman and CEO of Bank of America, and Darren Woods, chairman and CEO of ExxonMobil, have also joined the board. Other executives joining include James Taiclet, chair, president and CEO of Lockheed Martin; Chuck Robbins, chair and CEO of Cisco; and Brendan Bechtel, chairman and CEO of Bechtel. The expanded board also features Mike Wirth, chairman and CEO of Chevron, and Ed Bastian, CEO of Delta Air Lines. Additional members include Jim Fitterling, chairman and CEO of Dow; Jenny Johnson, CEO of Franklin Templeton; and Chris Nassetta, president and CEO of Hilton. Vimal Kapur, chairman and CEO of Honeywell; and James Quincey, executive chair of Coca-Cola Co., are also part of the board. Saudi members include Tareq Amin, CEO of Humain; John Pagano, group CEO of Red Sea Global and managing director of AIUa Development Co., and Kamal Bahamdan, CEO of Safanad. The board also includes Tareq Al-Sadhan, CEO of Saudi National Bank, and Abdullah Al-Zamil, chair of SENAAT, formerly Zamil Industrial. The council said the appointments reflect its renewed role in strengthening and diversifying Saudi-US economic relations across sectors including finance, energy, technology, tourism, defense, infrastructure and advanced industries.—DNA

Federal capital needs proper representation in NFC Award: ICCI

The ICCI President further said that the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, being the mother body of the business community in the federal capital, remains fully committed to safeguarding the legitimate interests of traders, industrialists and entrepreneurs without any discrimination

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Sardar Tahir Mehmood has called for the immediate inclusion of Islamabad in the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, stating that the federal capital cannot effectively meet its growing developmental, administrative and civic challenges without receiving an appropriate share in national financial resources. He emphasized that the business community, which serves as the backbone of the country's economy, must be given proper recognition and meaningful participation in economic policy-making to ensure sustainable growth and business-friendly reforms. Talking to different visiting delegations of business leaders at the Chamber House on Wednesday, he said that Islamabad, despite being the country's capital and an important economic center, has remained deprived of adequate financial allocations for years. He maintained that granting Islamabad representation in the NFC Award

would help strengthen civic infrastructure, improve municipal services and address the rapidly increasing needs of the city's residents and business sector. Sardar Tahir Mehmood observed that the business community is currently facing immense challenges due to increasing administrative pressures, high operational costs and various economic difficulties, which are negatively affecting trade and investment activities. He stressed that sustainable economic growth is only possible when traders, industrialists and entrepreneurs are taken into confidence and provided a conducive environment for doing business. He termed Islamabad's inclusion in the NFC Award a crucial step toward ensuring improved governance and long-term development in the federal capital. "Islamabad must receive its rightful financial share so that the city can progress in line with modern economic and urban requirements," he remarked. He added that enhanced financial resources would enable the authorities to improve public services, infrastructure and facilities necessary for promoting economic activities and attracting investment. The ICCI President further said that the Islamabad Chamber of

Commerce and Industry, being the mother body of the business community in the federal capital, remains fully committed to safeguarding the legitimate interests of traders, industrialists and entrepreneurs without any discrimination. He added that the issue has become more significant as the government has initiated deliberations on amendments to the NFC Award formula, making it the right time to effectively present Islamabad's case at the national level. The visiting business delegations strongly supported the demand for Islamabad's inclusion in the NFC Award and stated that the federal capital deserves adequate financial allocations in accordance with its administrative responsibilities, growing population and expanding commercial activities. They emphasized that sufficient financial resources are essential to address the city's developmental needs and improve facilities for both residents and the business community. On the occasion, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub and Vice President Muhammad Irfan Chaudhry, Executive Members, Ishaq Sial, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Waseem Chaudhry and senior member Israr ul-Haq Mishwani were also present.

Indonesia to review visa waivers

JAKARTA: Indonesia will review its visa-free entry policy for nationals of Southeast Asian countries after a string of arrests of foreigners accused of running illegal gambling and scam operations, a top immigration official said Wednesday. Authorities last week detained more than 500 people in two separate raids on an online gambling ring in the capital Jakarta and a scamming syndicate in Batam, in eastern Riau Islands province. Those arrested were nationals of Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Laos and Myanmar, which all enjoy 30-day visa-free stays in Indonesia, as well as China, which is not included in the waiver scheme. Indonesian immigration boss Hendarsam Marantoko said the illicit activities were cause for "serious concern." "Cases of foreigners involved in illegal activities, including those coming from countries granted visa-free entry facilities, give rise to (a need for) evaluation" of policies, he said in a statement. Investigators have found that many of those allegedly involved in the illegal gambling center in Jakarta had entered Indonesia using visa waivers or applied for permits on arrival. In recent weeks, immigration authorities have carried out more than 6,700 "administrative actions" including more than 2,000 deportations and cancellations of stay permits, Hendarsam said.—APP

Palestinians say West Bank teen killed by Israeli fire

RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories: Palestinian health officials said a teenager was killed by Israeli fire in a West Bank village on Wednesday, the latest in a series of violent incidents shaking the Israeli-occupied territory. The health ministry in Ramallah identified the victim as 16-year-old Yusef Ali Kaabnah, saying he was "killed by occupation bullets" near the town of Jiljilya, north of Ramallah. The Palestinian Red Crescent said he had been shot in the chest during a raid by Israeli settlers who were accompanied by Israeli troops. Four others were injured in the incident, it added. The Israeli military told AFP it was looking into the incident. Violence has increased in the West Bank since the start of the war in Gaza in October 2023.

According to an AFP tally based on Palestinian health ministry figures, Israeli troops or settlers have killed at least 1,071 Palestinians — many of them militants, but also scores of civilians — in the West Bank since the war began. Official Israeli figures show at least 46 Israelis, including soldiers and civilians, have been killed in Palestinian attacks or during Israeli military operations in the same period.—APP

Microsoft Israel chief to step down over spy probe

LONDON: Microsoft Israel's general manager, Alon Haimovich, is to leave the company after an investigation into its relationship with the country's military, The Guardian reported. The inquiry was ordered by Microsoft in the US after a joint investigative piece by The Guardian, +972 Magazine and Local Call found that the company's technology was used to spy on phone conversations between Palestinian civilians. The publications uncovered evidence that Israeli military intelligence Unit 8200 had used Microsoft's Azure cloud technology to store a huge number of intercepted conversations. Microsoft's investigation found that the Israeli military violated its terms of service when it used Azure to spy on and store calls, and that Israel-based employees had not been transparent with the parent company about how the technology was used. Haimovich, The Guardian reported, was vital to developing the relationship between the Israeli military and Microsoft, having attended a meeting in 2021 between CEO Satya Nadella and the then-commander of Unit 8200. Haimovich later oversaw the relationship, the newspaper added, which allowed Unit 8200 to create a vast network within the Azure platform that enabled members to analyze millions of phone calls made by Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Israeli business paper Globes reported that Haimovich was later summoned by the Microsoft inquiry team, which included lawyers at US firm Covington & Burling, after it visited the Israeli subsidiary's offices near Tel Aviv.—APP

UAE-owned tanker leaks some fuel off Oman

DUBAI: A unit of state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company said on Wednesday that one of its tankers struck by Iranian drones last week has leaked a small amount of fuel off the coast of Oman, underscoring the ecological risks stemming from the Iran war. Tehran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz has made navigating the vital shipping corridor a precarious task. Hundreds of vessels remain trapped in the Gulf. ADNOC Logistics & Services said it was monitoring the situation concerning its vessel, the M.V. Barakah, and was working "closely with the relevant authorities and specialist response teams." "The ADNOC Logistics & Services vessel Barakah remains at anchor off the coast of Oman after being impacted by two Iranian drones on May 4," a company spokesperson said. "A small amount of what is understood to be bunker fuel was unfortunately released as a result of the incident." The spokesperson did not say how much fuel was believed to have leaked. At the time of the attack, ADNOC L&S said no crew members were injured and the tanker was not carrying any cargo. Oman's Maritime Security Center did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Aerial images from Copernicus' Sentinel satellites on May 7 and 9 showed a white streak trailing from a vessel identified by TankerTrackers.com as the M.V. Barakah near Oman's Musandam Peninsula. "The white trail ... is definitely consistent with oil and is clearly coming out of the tanker," said Louis Goddard, co-founder of consultancy Data Desk, which focuses on climate and commodities. The slick was no longer visible in more recent imagery, Elizabeth C. Atwood, Earth observation senior scientist at Plymouth Marine Laboratory, told Reuters. Separately last week, satellite images showed a suspected oil spill covering dozens of square kilometers of sea near Iran's main oil hub of Kharg Island. Iran's top environmental official said on Tuesday it was likely caused by a tanker dumping waste water and not a leak from oil facilities. Chinese oil tanker exits Strait of Hormuz, stops at Gulf of Oman, data shows A Chinese supertanker carrying two million barrels of Iraqi crude sailed through the Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday after being stranded in the Gulf for more than two months due to the US-Iran war, LSEG and Kpler ship-tracking data showed. The Very Large Crude Carrier Yuan Hua Hu is now anchored off the Gulf of Oman, near where the US Navy has set up a blockade on Iranian vessels, LSEG data showed. The crossing comes as US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping are due to meet over the next two days, and after Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi visited Beijing last week. The voyage marks the third known passage by a Chinese oil tanker through the Strait of Hormuz since the US-Israeli war with Iran began on February 28, based on ship-tracking data. Iran has appeared to tighten its control over the strait in recent days, cutting deals with Iraq and Pakistan to ship oil and liquefied natural gas from the region, according to sources with knowledge of the matter.—APP

Briefs

PM directs to provide all possible facilities to Hajj pilgrims

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Wednesday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and briefed him on the arrangements for ongoing Hajj operation. "Intending Hajj pilgrims are the guests of Allah Almighty. There should be no negligence whatsoever in their service and facilities by the Pakistani Hajj Mission in Saudi Arabia," the prime minister directed. He also instructed that all possible facilities be provided to the intending Hajj pilgrims at the airport. - APP

Spanish envoy meets SAPM Fahd Haroon

ISLAMABAD: Carlos Aragón, Ambassador of Spain to Pakistan, called on Fahd Haroon, Minister of State/Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media, at his office in Islamabad on Wednesday. During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on the evolving digital media landscape and discussed matters of mutual interest, particularly the growing role of digital platforms and broader developments in the media and information ecosystem. The discussion also focused on opportunities for cooperation in the field of digital media engagement. The meeting reflected the warm and cordial relations between Pakistan and Spain, reaffirming the commitment of both countries to strengthening bilateral understanding and cooperation in emerging media domains.

Modest gains in GDP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) and per capita income increased in dollar terms at a modest pace, indicating a recovery in the country's overall output compared to the previous year, the government said on Wednesday. It was revealed that the country's economy is expected to grow by 3.70 per cent in the current fiscal year, a revision from earlier projections of 4pc, suggesting that Pakistan will fall short of its GDP target. The provisional growth rates in agriculture, industry and services in FY26 are 2.89pc, 3.51pc and 4.09pc, respectively. The 117th meeting of the National Accounts Committee (NAC) was held in the federal capital on Wednesday at the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics Headquarters, Statistics House. The secretary of the Ministry of Planning and Development chaired the meeting. - APP

'Same enemy on both borders' Minister sees no difference between Kabul, New Delhi

Khawaja Asif says Afghanistan refusing written assurances against cross-border terrorism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Wednesday warned Afghanistan's Taliban-led government against continued support for militants, saying Pakistan would respond to Kabul the same way it had responded to India. "There is no difference between Delhi and Kabul," Asif said while addressing the National Assembly in Islamabad, adding that the "same enemy" was currently

sitting on both Pakistan's eastern and western borders. The defence minister mentioned that the Kabul government had become a "proxy" of India and was unwilling to provide Pakistan with concrete assurances regarding cross-border terrorism. "Kabul is not giving us any guarantee to stop terrorism," Asif said, adding that Afghan authorities only made verbal commitments and were not prepared to provide written assurances. "If they do not stop backing terrorists, there will be war," he warned, saying Pakistan had attempted to resolve the issue through dialogue involving Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. "We tried very hard to make them understand with the support of three countries," Asif said, referring to diplomatic efforts involving the Taliban administration. The minister also said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had not cooperated with the federal government for a long period in dealing with security challenges, though cooperation had now improved. During his speech, opposition members shouted slogans and interrupted proceedings as Asif praised the sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces. "Our armed forces are giving unconditional sacrifices," he said, adding that every citizen sacrificing their life at the border represented Pakistan's identity. The ties between the neighbouring nations have plummeted in recent years as Pakistan has repeatedly pressed the Taliban to ensure that their soil isn't used for terrorism against Islamabad - a commitment that they have yet to fulfil. While friendly countries have sought to ease tensions, Pakistan has made it clear that it would not compromise on the safety of its people and stresses repeatedly that the Taliban regime should ensure it does not support militancy. Efforts by Türkiye and Qatar to mediate a truce last year briefly eased tensions but failed to secure a lasting agreement between Islamabad and Kabul.



ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by former National Accountability Bureau Director General Shahzad Saleem challenging the charge sheet issued against him by the anti-corruption watchdog. A single bench of Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir issued a written judgment stating that the charge sheet merely constitutes a notice of allegations and is neither a final decision nor a conviction. The court declared the petition not maintainable. The judgment clarified that the purpose of a charge sheet is to provide the accused a fair opportunity to defend himself. The court observed that the petitioner has the right to raise all legal and factual objections before the investigating officer. Justice Tahir ruled that no malice or lack of jurisdiction could be established in the issuance of the charge sheet against Shahzad Saleem. The court further held that the writ petition against the charge sheet was premature, adding that if any adverse order is passed as a result of the inquiry, the petitioner may approach the appropriate forum. A citizen named Nadeem Ghaffar from Faisalabad had filed a petition challenging his appointment and promotion. The petitioner's case was also examined in light of a suo motu case of the Supreme Court. With the dismissal of the petition, the charge sheet issued by NAB on October 10, 2024, stands, and the inquiry against the former NAB official will continue. - APP

IHC dismisses former NAB DG petition

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by former National Accountability Bureau Director General Shahzad Saleem challenging the charge sheet issued against him by the anti-corruption watchdog. A single bench of Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir issued a written judgment stating that the charge sheet merely constitutes a notice of allegations and is neither a final decision nor a conviction. The court declared the petition not maintainable. The judgment clarified that the purpose of a charge sheet is to provide the accused a fair opportunity to defend himself. The court observed that the petitioner has the right to raise all legal and factual objections before the investigating officer. Justice Tahir ruled that no malice or lack of jurisdiction could be established in the issuance of the charge sheet against Shahzad Saleem. The court further held that the writ petition against the charge sheet was premature, adding that if any adverse order is passed as a result of the inquiry, the petitioner may approach the appropriate forum. A citizen named Nadeem Ghaffar from Faisalabad had filed a petition challenging his appointment and promotion. The petitioner's case was also examined in light of a suo motu case of the Supreme Court. With the dismissal of the petition, the charge sheet issued by NAB on October 10, 2024, stands, and the inquiry against the former NAB official will continue. - APP

Fly Dubai suspends flights to Pakistan

KARACHI: Flydubai has suspended its flight operations from and to Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar till October 26 due to "operational reasons", the airline's flight inquiry in Pakistan said. However, flight operations from and to Karachi will continue as usual, the airline confirmed. Flydubai, a low-cost airline based in the United Arab Emirates, launched its operations in Islamabad and Lahore in July 2024, and commenced flights to Peshawar in May last year. According to aviation monitor Flightradar24, flydubai's flights between Islamabad and Dubai (FZ353, FZ354), Lahore and Dubai (FZ359, FZ360), and Peshawar and Dubai (FZ375, FZ376) were cancelled since at least May 7.

A statement on flydubai's website, issued on March 31 - days after the Iran war began - says that the airline is "currently operating flights across its network with a reduced schedule". It advised passengers to regularly check flight status and operational updates for the latest information before heading to the airport. While the statement did not mention the Middle East conflict that sparked on March 28 with US-Israeli strikes on Iran, it said, "We continue to closely monitor the situation and update our flight schedule accordingly. The safety of our passengers and crew remains our highest priority." The US-Iran war has resulted in a sharp spike in jet fuel prices, leading to air travel's worst crisis in years. Late last month, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) warned that the jet fuel crisis tied to the Iran war could hit Asia hardest first. "I think we will see airlines starting to reduce some of their schedules as we go towards the peak summer period in anticipation of some fuel shortages," IATA head Willie Walsh said. - DNA

IHC dismisses former NAB DG petition

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by former National Accountability Bureau Director General Shahzad Saleem challenging the charge sheet issued against him by the anti-corruption watchdog. A single bench of Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir issued a written judgment stating that the charge sheet merely constitutes a notice of allegations and is neither a final decision nor a conviction. The court declared the petition not maintainable. The judgment clarified that the purpose of a charge sheet is to provide the accused a fair opportunity to defend himself. The court observed that the petitioner has the right to raise all legal and factual objections before the investigating officer. Justice Tahir ruled that no malice or lack of jurisdiction could be established in the issuance of the charge sheet against Shahzad Saleem. The court further held that the writ petition against the charge sheet was premature, adding that if any adverse order is passed as a result of the inquiry, the petitioner may approach the appropriate forum. A citizen named Nadeem Ghaffar from Faisalabad had filed a petition challenging his appointment and promotion. The petitioner's case was also examined in light of a suo motu case of the Supreme Court. With the dismissal of the petition, the charge sheet issued by NAB on October 10, 2024, stands, and the inquiry against the former NAB official will continue. - APP

Finance Minister, US official discuss economic cooperation

Welcoming the US delegation, Senator Aurangzeb appreciated the positive trajectory of Pakistan-U.S. relations and underscored the government's commitment to fostering a transparent, predictable, and investor-friendly environment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb and U.S. Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs S. Paul Kapur on Wednesday discussed bilateral economic cooperation, trade and investment opportunities, and Pakistan's reform agenda aimed at strengthening macroeconomic stability and improving the business climate. According to press release issued by finance ministry, Kapur was accompanied by U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Ms. Natalie A. Baker in the meeting. Welcoming the U.S. delegation, Senator Aurangzeb appreciated the positive trajectory of Pakistan-U.S. relations and underscored the government's commitment to fostering a transparent, predictable, and investor-friendly environment. He highlighted Pakistan's ongoing economic stabilization efforts, progress on reforms, and measures aimed at improving fiscal sustainability, broadening the tax base, accelerating digitization, and promoting financial inclusion. Aurangzeb also shared recent positive trends in key economic indicators, including remittances, external inflows, and renewed access to international capital markets. He emphasized the government's focus on attracting long-term investment, particularly in sectors such as energy, mining, infrastructure, technology, and digital finance.

On the occasion, S. Paul Kapur acknowledged Pakistan's ongoing economic reform efforts and emphasized the importance of maintaining a competitive and predictable business environment to encourage greater foreign investment and commercial engagement. He expressed the United States' interest in expanding economic cooperation with Pakistan and noted the strong interest of American companies in exploring long-term investment opportunities in the country. U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Ms. Natalie A. Baker appreciated Pakistan's continued engagement with American companies and acknowledged the efforts being made to facilitate a more enabling and investor-friendly business environment. She noted the growing interest among U.S. businesses in exploring opportunities in Pakistan across a range of sectors. Discussions also covered opportunities for enhanced collaboration with U.S. businesses and investors, with both sides recognizing the importance of a conducive business environment and continued engagement between public and private sector stakeholders. The U.S. side expressed interest in expanding economic and commercial cooperation with Pakistan and appreciated the Government's efforts to support economic reforms and facilitate investment. The meeting concluded with both sides reaffirming their commitment to strengthening Pakistan-U.S. economic ties and maintaining constructive engagement to advance shared economic and development objectives.

Pakistan receives \$1.32 billion from IMF, says SBP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan received \$1.32 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after its Executive Board completed the third review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), the central bank said on Wednesday. According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the IMF had approved the disbursement of \$1.1bn under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and around \$220 million under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). Following the approval, the SBP said it received a total of SDR 914m - equivalent to around \$1.3bn - from the IMF on May 12, 2026. The central bank added that the inflow will be reflected in Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves for the week ending May 15, 2026. The IMF had approved the disbursement in a meeting of its Executive Board on May 8, the fund said. It also gives Pakistan fresh support as it rebuilds reserves and tries to keep inflation in check, while meeting IMF demands to raise revenue and advance the privatisation of state-owned companies, the IMF said. Pakistan's 37-month EFF arrangement was approved on



September 25, 2024, and is aimed at building resilience and enabling sustainable growth. Key priorities include entrenching macroeconomic stability through sound policy implementation, rebuilding foreign exchange reserves, and broadening the tax base. It also focuses on strengthening competition and productivity, reforming state-owned enterprises, improving public services, expanding health, education and social protection spending, restoring energy sector viability, and intensifying anti-corruption efforts. The 28-month RSF arrangement, approved on May 9, 2025, supports efforts to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters and strengthen climate resilience. Reforms focus on disaster preparedness, improved public investment processes, more efficient water use, stronger federal-provincial coordination, better disclosure of climate-related risks, and supporting mitigation commitments.

Russian ship carried nuclear reactor parts

DNA

MADRID: A Russian ship that sank in the Mediterranean after its engine room exploded may have been carrying pieces for nuclear reactors used in submarines, a Spanish government document shows. The Ursa Major sank on Dec. 23, 2024, between Spain and Algeria while allegedly on a journey from St. Petersburg to Russia's eastern of Vladivostok. Two crew members were lost while 14 other people were saved by Spanish rescue craft. It has emerged that the Ursa Major's Russian captain told Spanish port authorities following his rescue that the vessel was carrying parts for nuclear reactors suitable for use in submarines. In a written response to opposition lawmakers, the Spanish government wrote that the ship's captain "confessed" that the ship was carrying "components for two nuclear reactors similar to those used in submarines." The response was included in a document registered by the Spanish parliament on Feb. 23 and reported by CNN on Tuesday. The document has since been seen by The Associated Press.

Attallah Tarar slams India for staging false flag operations



DNA

ISLAMABAD: India Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI), and Digital Debate jointly hosted a Seminar titled "Marka-e-Haq: Victory in the Battlefield and Beyond". Federal Information Minister Attallah Tarar graced the occasion as Chief Guest while the former Foreign Minister Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani was the Guest of Honour. The speakers included Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman ISSI; Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi, Foreign Office Spokesperson, Air Marshal (Retd) Farooq Habib, former Vice Chief of Pakistan Air Force; Ms. Nasim Zehra, renowned author and anchorperson; Dr. Khurram Abbas, Director ISC at ISSI; and Mr. Ahmad Hassan Al-Arbi, Defense Analyst. In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood observed that the month of May

has repeatedly emerged as a defining month in Pakistan's strategic history. He noted that Pakistan's response in May conflict combined battlefield success with diplomatic outreach, information management, and political coherence, projecting the country as a confident, responsible, and resilient state committed to regional peace while firmly safeguarding its sovereignty and security interests. Highlighting the role of the armed forces, diplomats, media, and strategic experts in countering disinformation and shaping international discourse, Chairman ISSI stressed the need to transform these strategic gains into long-term institutional, economic, diplomatic, and intellectual strength through continued national unity and strategic foresight. The Chief Guest, Attallah Tarar called out India for relying on unsubstantiated allegations and politically motivated narratives following a false flag operation, noting that an FIR was registered within minutes without credible investigation or evidence. He emphasized that Pakistan effectively countered misinformation through timely and fact-based engagement with international media and diplomatic forums, further strengthened by Pakistan's offer for a transparent joint investigation, which remains unanswered. Highlighting the role of the younger generation in the information domain, he said Pakistan successfully projected its narrative globally while exposing the weaknesses and contradictions in India's claims.

MAY 2026

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:
www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pl
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@Postislamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-8488394