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PM Shebaz stresses result-oriented use of public funds

Detailed News On Page-08

FM briefs World Bank team about reform

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No plan to raise voting age to 25

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Baqaei says responded to US proposal

Process of talks thru Pakistan ongoing: Iran

Iran officially announces Persian Gulf Strait Authority to manage Strait of Hormuz

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: The process of talks through Pakistani mediation is ongoing, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said on Monday, and both Iran and the US have sent their comments on the recent Iranian proposal. Pakistan shared the revised Iranian proposal to end war with US on Sunday night, Reuters quoted a Pakistani source. Baqaei also said that Iran was in continuous contact with Oman and all relevant parties to discuss the Strait of Hormuz mechanism. Iranian and Omani technical teams met last week in Oman to negotiate a mechanism for safe transit in the Strait of Hormuz, Baqaei said. "We have no enmity with any of the countries of the region including the UAE," state media also quoted Baqaei as saying. Iranian media said Sunday that the United States had failed to make any concrete concessions in its latest response to Iran's proposed agenda for negotiations to end the war. The Fars news agency said Washington had presented a five-point list which included a demand for Iran to keep only one nuclear site in operation and transfer its stockpile of highly enriched uranium to the United States. The Mehr news agency, meanwhile, said: "The United States, offering no tangible concessions, wants to obtain concessions that it failed to obtain during the war, which will lead to an impasse in the negotiations." In its proposal, Iran had called for an end of the war on all fronts including Israel's campaign in Lebanon, as well as a halt to the US naval blockade on Iranian ports in place since April 13. It also called for lifting all of the US sanctions and the release of Iranian assets frozen abroad under longstanding US sanctions, according to the Iranian foreign ministry in a press conference last week.

Iran, Turkiye intensify diplomatic contacts

DNA

TEHRAN: Iranian and Turkish foreign ministers held important consultations on the rapidly evolving situation in the Middle East, discussing ongoing diplomatic developments aimed at easing tensions and preventing further escalation in the region. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and his Iranian counterpart reviewed the latest regional security situation, including developments linked to the Gulf crisis and growing concerns over maritime security and regional stability. Ankara and Doha have repeatedly stressed the need for dialogue and diplomacy to avoid a wider conflict in the Middle East. Meanwhile, Qatar strongly condemned the recent attack on Saudi Arabia, terming it a "serious threat" to regional peace and security. Qatari officials warned that continued escalation could endanger maritime trade routes, energy supplies, and overall Gulf stability. In a significant diplomatic development, a senior Qatari minister praised Pakistan's "constructive and balanced role" in ongoing regional diplomacy efforts. Qatar and Turkiye both acknowledged Pakistan's

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IED blast in Wana kills elder

Tribal chief Malik Tariq Wazir among dead in Rustam Bazaar explosion, four others injured, say police

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: At least three people, including a prominent tribal elder and Chief of the Ahmadzai Wazir tribe Malik Tariq Wazir, were killed while four others sustained injuries in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast that struck the busy Rustam Bazaar area of Wana on Monday morning, officials said. According to District Police Officer (DPO) Mohammad Tahir Shah Wazir, the explosion occurred near Gulshan Plaza when Tariq's vehicle was passing through the market area. The powerful blast resulted in

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Trump issues dire warning to Iran

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump issued a fresh warning to Iran on Sunday, saying it had to move quickly towards a peace deal or "there won't be anything left of them." Washington, locked in conflict with Tehran since US and Israeli forces launched major strikes on the Islamic republic beginning February 28, has struggled to break an impasse and make any progress toward ending a war that has shaken the Middle East and sent energy prices climbing. "For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them,"

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DPM Dar, Qatari deputy FM talk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday spoke with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar Mohammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi. During the telephonic conversation, they discussed the evolving regional situation and matters of mutual interest.

Both sides underscored the importance of dialogue and diplomatic engagement in addressing regional challenges. Minister Al-Khulaifi appreciated Pakistan's constructive role and ongoing diplomatic efforts. Deputy Prime Minister Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to advancing the shared objectives of peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and beyond.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. - DNA

Pakistan condemns drone attack on UAE nuclear power plant

A drone strike had triggered a fire near Barakh Nuclear Power Plant in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, reporting no injuries or impact on radiation levels, according to the UAE's defence ministry

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Monday strongly condemned the drone attack on the United Arab Emirates' nuclear power plant, saying that "such reckless actions carry potentially catastrophic and irreversible consequences for human life, the environment and regional as well as global peace and security". A drone strike had triggered a fire near Barakh Nuclear Power Plant in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, reporting no injuries or impact on radiation levels, according to the UAE's defence ministry. The UAE defence ministry said two other drones had been "successfully" dealt with, and that the drones had been launched from the "western border". It did not elaborate. Emirati officials said they were investigating the source of the strike and that the UAE had the full right to respond to such "terrorist attacks". The UAE has previously accused Iran of attacking its energy targets in what it has called an escalation of the conflict in the region. In the statement released on Monday, the FO said that "any deliberate targeting of nuclear facilities" constituted a

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Saudi Arabia says three drones intercepted

DNA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia on Sunday said it intercepted three drones after they entered its territory from Iraqi airspace. The Kingdom's defence ministry spokesman Major General Turki Al-Maliki said that it would take the necessary operational measures to respond to any attempt to violate its sovereignty and security. Al-Maliki added it will also take action to ensure the safety of citizens and residents on Saudi territory. While hostilities during the Iran conflict have largely been scaled down since a ceasefire came into effect in April, drones have been launched from Iraq towards Gulf countries. Qatar has condemned attempts to target Saudi Arabia and expressed Doha's support to all measures the Kingdom has

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Briefs

Lockdown lifted in the Capital

Cabinet Division issues notification allowing unrestricted business hours across Pakistan

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday approved the exemption of business closure timings across the country until May 31, effectively allowing commercial centres to operate without the previously imposed restrictions. According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Division, all shops, departmental stores, bazaars, markets and shopping malls will remain open on all days of the week without restriction on closing hours. The exemption also applies to bakeries, tandoors, restaurants and grocery stores, which have been allowed to continue operations beyond the earlier fixed timings.

Pak slams drone attack on KSA

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Strongly Condemns Drone Attacks against Saudi Arabia, Reaffirms Unwavering Support The Government of Pakistan condemns in the strongest possible terms the drone attacks carried out against the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 17 May 2026. Such attacks constitute a serious violation of Kingdom's sovereignty, and territorial integrity, and appear to be an attempt to further undermine the regional peace and stability. The Government and the people of Pakistan stand in solidarity with the Government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during this critical time, and reaffirm their full and unwavering support for the Kingdom's security, peace and prosperity.

Atta Tarar says

No plan to raise Voting age to 25

PTI's Gohar says depriving 18-year-olds of the right to vote would affect democratic process

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Monday dismissed reports suggesting that the government was considering a proposal to raise the minimum voting age from 18 to 25. "Why should we comment on rumours?... No such proposals are under our consideration," Tarar said while responding to a question.

The debate emerged after Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaulah recently commented that a proposal to increase the voting age was currently under consideration during discussions related to the proposed 28th Constitutional Amendment. "A person cannot contest an election until the age of 25, then [...] if that is the case, the age for contesting elections should also be reduced to 18," he said while speaking on Geo News' programme 'Jirga'. Under the prevailing election laws, a Pakistani

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No surge in power tariff in June

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: The Power Division said on Monday that the electricity tariff will remain unchanged in June, crediting effective policy measures for shielding consumers from additional financial pressure despite challenges in fuel supply and generation costs. Electricity consumers have been spared a monthly fuel adjustment burden of between Rs5 and Rs6 per unit, which would otherwise have increased electricity bills, a spokesperson said. He added that despite the suspension of LNG supplies and expensive furnace oil, no extra cost has been passed on to end users. According to the Power Division,

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In rare unity, KP governor and CM criticise Centre



SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Monday criticised the federal government over the suspension of gas supply in the province, urging the Centre to ensure KP gets its due rights. During a joint press conference in Peshawar alongside Governor Kundi, the KP chief executive claimed that CNG stations were being shut down across the province due to the lack of gas supply. "Article 158 of the Constitution clearly states that a gas-producing province has the first right over its resources," he added. CM Afridi said the people of KP should not be forced

into further difficulties, claiming decisions taken behind closed doors were being imposed on the province.

He alleged that the federal government was adopting "unlawful and unconstitutional" behaviour in several development projects and claimed Rs12 billion allocated for the merged tribal districts had been deducted unfairly.

"The suspension of gas in the province is an illegal act," he said, urging all stakeholders not to support unconstitutional measures against KP. On the security situation, the KP CM said that if "interference ended" and a joint strategy was formed with the provincial government, peace could be restored in the province within 100 days.

Governor Kundi questioned whether the KP's "fault" was producing gas and electricity for the country, saying the province was supplying cheap energy and mineral resources to the state. "If we receive our water share, we will not have to purchase wheat," he said, urging authorities to take notice of the situation. The KP governor noted the province was already fighting terrorism and "carrying the coffins of police and army personnel", warning that denying provincial rights would amount to injustice. "First, sacrifices were sought from the public on petrol and electricity, and they are now being tested through CNG," he said. "We are in contact with the federation and have repeatedly conveyed that this behaviour towards our province must stop," he added. The KP governor appealed to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to resolve the province's issues with the same speed shown in other matters.

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Gurmukhi course launched at Lahore Fort

LAHORE: The Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) in collaboration with Rational Dialogue Forum (RDF) has launched a Gurmukhi Course (Level 1) at Lahore Fort to promote cultural understanding, linguistic heritage and interfaith harmony. The initiative also reflects the government's keen interest in encouraging educational and cultural activities aimed at preserving shared heritage and fostering mutual respect among communities, said a press release issued here on Monday. The course was being conducted at Akbari Mahal Kutub Khana & Archives, Lahore Fort from May 06 to May 25, 2026 and instructed by Ustad Shabbir. This initiative has been introduced as part of WCLA's continued efforts to preserve and promote the diverse cultural and historical heritage associated with Lahore and Punjab. The Gurmukhi script holds significant importance in the history, literature and heritage of the region and the course aims to provide participants with a foundational understanding of the language and script.

Walled City of Lahore Authority DG Najmus Saqib stated, "Preserving Punjab's multilingual and multicultural heritage is a key objective of WCLA. He said that under the directions of the Government of Punjab, initiatives like the Gurmukhi Course help promote cultural harmony, research and public awareness about the region's rich historical heritage." WCLA has invited students, researchers, heritage enthusiasts and members of the public to participate in the course and benefit from this educational initiative being hosted within the historic premises of Lahore Fort.—APP

Balochistan varsities receive Rs2.93b funding

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan universities have received Rs2.93 billion in support from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in FY 2025-26, reflecting continued funding assistance for higher education institutions across the province. According to an official document available with Wealth Pakistan, the HEC has continued extending financial support to universities in Balochistan through recurring grants, supplementary allocations, and tenure-track funding mechanisms. For FY2025-26, the University of Balochistan (UoB), Quetta, received a recurring grant of Rs948.805 million. In addition, the university received Rs10 million in supplementary funding and Rs39.549 million under tenure-track support. Similarly, the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS), Quetta, received Rs698 million during FY2025-26. The institution had received Rs722 million in FY2024-25 and Rs285 million in FY2023-24. Other universities across the province also continued receiving HEC support. Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University, Quetta, received Rs282 million in FY2025-26 compared with Rs313 million in FY2024-25 and Rs293 million in FY2023-24. The University of Turbat received Rs173 million in FY2025-26. It had received Rs192 million in FY2024-25 and Rs202 million in FY2023-24.—APP

Govt committed for investor-friendly policies

During the meeting, both sides discussed possible cooperation in retail brokerage, Islamic banking, fintech innovation, and capital market development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Founder, Chairman and CEO of Freedom Holding Corporation Timur Turlov met Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed opportunities for expanding investment and digital financial services in Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for IT Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister of State for Finance Mr. Bilal Azhar Kayani, SAPM Tariq Fatemi, SAPM on Industries and Production Mr. Haroon Akhtar Khan, and Foreign Secretary Ambassador Anma Baloch. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed Turlov and conveyed good wishes for Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. He appreciated Freedom Holding Corporation's interest in expanding its operations in Pakistan through branch networks, digital



ISLAMABAD: Timur Turlov, Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Freedom Holding Corp called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

financial services, and correspondent banking partnerships. The Prime Minister reiterated the government's commitment to economic reforms and investor-friendly policies aimed at accelerating growth and digital transformation. He highlighted the potential of Pakistan's young population and growing digital infrastructure, inviting the company to contribute to the development of the country's financial markets. During the meeting, both sides discussed possible cooperation in retail brokerage, Islamic banking, fintech innovation, and capital market development. Mr. Turlov expressed confidence in Pakistan's economic future and reaffirmed his company's interest in exploring long-term strategic investments in line with Pakistan's development priorities.

Multan museum goes operational

MULTAN: Director General Punjab Archaeology Zaheer Abbas Malik and Commissioner Multan Amir Kareem Khan inaugurated the newly built Multan museum here Monday, the day being observed all over the world as the International Museums Day and Punjab made the occasion special by simultaneously opening three new museums with two more opened in Gujrat and Sialkot. Two more museums were inaugurated today, one each in Gujrat in historical Ram Piyari building and in Sialkot, archaeology officials said on Monday. Punjab secretary Auzaf Ehsan Bhutta formally opened the museum in Sialkot while Project Director PMU Archaeology Malik Maqsood Ahmad inaugurated museum in Ram Piyari building in Gujrat. Scores of Multanites thronged newly built Multan museum including school girls, history lovers and media representatives to witness the historical occasion marking the fulfillment of decades long desire of the city of saints' inhabitants. "Three cities, three new museums." "This International Museums Day, Gujrat, Sialkot and Multan are each getting a new museum, because Punjab's history deserves to be seen, celebrated and passed on," says an Instagram post of

Punjab Archaeology department. The museum has been declared open for public free of charge, however, once the notification is issued, a nominal Rs 20 is expected to be charged per person while Rs 500 per person ticket would be charged in case of visit by foreigners, said Muhammad Hassan, the lead archaeologist who led the project to its completion after taking over its interior decoration assignment, the last segment of the project. Spread over 10 Kanal area, the Rs 111.70 million museum has emerged as a panorama of South Punjab history, culture and heritage, said DG Archaeology Punjab while talking to the newsmen after taking a round of all the galleries and facilities along with commissioner Khan. The museum encompasses preserved symbols from the ancient Indus Valley Civilization to the modern age, Zaheer Abbas Malik said adding it also covers Gandhara civilization, besides historical and cultural glimpses from Mughal era. The museum also showcases coins minted during different dynasties rule to help visitors visualize or imagine the trade and commerce activities during ancient times besides art and craft including Blue Pottery, Kashikari, camel skin art, and other traditional Multani crafts that

found space in art and craft gallery. DG Archaeology said that museums play a pivotal role in preserving identities and heritage of civilizations and Multan museum would serve that purpose—preserving the centuries old culture, history and arts under one roof. Commissioner Amir Kareem Khan declared May 18, 2026 a big day for Multanites for having a facility that was missing earlier adding it was an important cultural gift from Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz-led Punjab government to the people of Multan. "It would help keep younger generation abreast of our heritage, civilizational identity and history knowledge." Everybody present was happy as DG Zaheer Malik and commissioner Khan formally opened the museum, a success achieved after decades long struggle by Multan literary circles well supported by bureaucrats, former secretary tourism and archaeology Ehsan Bhutta, former commissioners Multan Muhammad Ali Gardezi, and Mehmood Javed Akhtar, senior bureaucrat Babar Hayat Tarar, retired SDO archaeology Malik Ghulam Muhammad and others. Veteran educationist and intellectual Prof. Dr. Hameed Raza Siddiqui, and seasoned journalist.—DNA

Bangladeshi delegation reviews tourism facilities

The Bangladeshi delegation appreciated the Punjab government's efforts to develop new tourist destinations, expand tourism opportunities and enhance visitor facilities across the province

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of senior government officials from Bangladesh visited facilities operated by the Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP) in Murree and Patriata. Upon arrival at Patriata, the delegation was received by TDCP General Manager Operations and Deputy General Manager North, who welcomed the guests and presented bouquets. The visitors also enjoyed the chairlift ride at Patriata and praised the tourist facilities and scenic landscape. The delegation later visited TDCP Patriata Huts via golf carts, where members inspected residential and accommodation facilities. Officials of the Tourism Department gave a detailed briefing

on recent developments in the tourism sector in Murree and adjoining areas, including infrastructure improvements and upcoming projects. The PTDC spokesperson said the initiatives were being implemented under the vision of the Government of Punjab to promote tourism, improve infrastructure and provide modern facilities for visitors. At the conclusion of the visit, commemorative souvenirs were presented to the delegation. The Bangladeshi delegation appreciated the Punjab government's efforts to develop new tourist destinations, expand tourism opportunities and enhance visitor facilities across the province.

Innovative teacher aid kits to boost learning skill

ISLAMABAD: As part of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training's (MoFEPT) ongoing efforts to strengthen foundational learning for out-of-school children, Secretary MoFEPT, Mr Nadeem Mahbub, visited a National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) Non-Formal Education (NFE) Centre in Bhara Kahu. During the visit on Monday, the Secretary observed classroom teaching activities and interacted with teacher Ms Maryam Imran and 57 enrolled students to evaluate the effective use of the recently distributed Non-Formal Education Teacher Aid Kits in daily learning practices. The interaction focused on how these kits are being integrated into classroom instruction to promote interactive, activity-based learning in a multigrade environment. The NFE Teacher Aid Kits are part of a major initiative under which MoFEPT has distributed 3,450 kits to non-formal education teachers across Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Designed specifically for non-formal and accelerated learning classrooms, the kits aim to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy through hands-on, participatory, and child-centered teaching approaches. Each kit contains 17 educational items, including pocket boards, flashcards, character masks, Snake and Ladder games, handmade puppets, English and Urdu alphabet flashcards, word-making puzzles, number cards, math jigsaw puzzles, magic charts, science charts and experiment materials, and unit tens cards. These teaching resources support engaging and inclusive classroom instruction through storytelling, educational games, visual learning, role play, and collaborative learning activities, particularly in multigrade settings where a single teacher works with learners of varying ages and learning levels simultaneously. The Secretary appreciated the dedication and efforts of non-formal education teachers working at the community level and emphasized the importance of the effective use of learning materials to further improve student engagement and learning outcomes. To support implementation, MoFEPT has also recently conducted ICT-based orientation sessions for all NFE teachers on the effective use of Teacher Aid Kits and activity-based teaching methodologies. The Secretary was accompanied during the visit by Director General NCHD, Mr Ali Asghar, along with members of the NCHD team.—APP

CDA, JICA discuss Islamabad water sector reforms

Chairman CDA mentioned that construction activities on the Shahdara Dam have already commenced

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner of Islamabad, Sohail Ashraf, held a meeting with a delegation from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) at the CDA Headquarters on Monday. During the meeting, discussions were held regarding reforms and improvement projects in the water sector. The primary objective of the meeting was to explore further avenues for technical assistance in projects aimed at improving water supply and quality in Islamabad. It was discussed in the meeting that JICA will work

on a comprehensive Master Plan for water supply, sewage and drainage systems for Islamabad. JICA delegation said that the master plan will remain viable until 2060, taking into account the future needs of the City. The meeting was

attended by CDA Member Administration Esfandiyar Balooh, DG Islamabad Water Sardar Khan Zimri and other relevant senior officers. Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf said that sustainable and continuous efforts will be made to ensure

an uninterrupted supply of clean water to the citizens of Islamabad. He further said that JICA will also provide its technical assistance regarding the Shahdara and Dotara Dams. Chairman CDA mentioned that construction activities on the

Shahdara Dam have already commenced. He added that multiple measures are being taken to prevent water wastage, eliminate line losses, and promote water conservation and efficient usage. He said that the completion of these measures will help ensure an uninterrupted water supply and meet the future needs of Islamabad. Chairman CDA further said that full benefit will be taken of JICA's technical expertise regarding the Simly and Sangjani water filtration plants. He added that the aim of these measures is to upgrade the basic water infrastructure. JICA delegation expressed its readiness to provide full technical cooperation to resolve water-related issues in Islamabad.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

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

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Islamabad Metropolitan

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- Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Students' creative exhibition "Pop Revolution" held at PNCA

Zahra Wadud Fatemi appreciated the creativity and hard work of the young artists. She lauded their artistic vision and encouraged them to continue pursuing their passion with dedication and confidence

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: A vibrant and colorful exhibition titled "Pop Revolution - Colors, Culture & Creativity" was organized by the Niftysphere Institute at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Islamabad, showcasing the creative talent of young artists from different disciplines. The exhibition featured impressive works from the departments of Textile Design, Graphic Design, Photography, and Interior Design. The event attracted a large number of art lovers, diplomats, students, and personalities from different walks of life. Prominent social figure Zahra Wadud Fatemi attended the event as the chief guest. Speaking on



the occasion, she highly appreciated the creativity and hard work of the young artists. She lauded their artistic vision and encouraged them to continue pursuing their passion with dedication and confidence. She said such platforms

are essential for promoting creativity and providing exposure to emerging talent in Pakistan. The exhibition was attended by envoys and representatives from Denmark, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia, reflecting the international in-

terest in Pakistan's growing art and design sector. Director General PNCA Ayub Jamali, Editor Daily Islamabad Post Ansar Mahmood Bhatti, Honorary Consul of Ghana Umer Shahid Butt, and many other distinguished guests also attend-



ed the event and appreciated the innovative display of artwork. Organizer Usman Shah briefed the guests about the objectives of the exhibition. He said the purpose of "Pop Revolution" was to encourage young artists and provide them

with a platform to showcase their talent and creative ideas. He added that art has the power to connect cultures and inspire positive social change. The exhibition displayed a blend of modern pop-art themes, cultural expres-

sions, photography, and contemporary interior concepts, which received immense appreciation from visitors. The colorful arrangements and creative atmosphere at the venue added to the charm of the event.

Dust-thunderstorm/ rain expected

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast dust-thunderstorm and rain from May 19 till May 23 with occasional gaps in upper parts of the country, bringing temporary relief from the prevailing very hot weather conditions in northern areas. While southern and central regions are likely to continue experiencing intense heat. According to the Met Office, a westerly wave entered the northwestern parts of the country on Monday night is likely to persist in upper parts till May 23. Under the influence of this weather system, dust-thunderstorm/rain accompanied by isolated hailstorms is expected in various districts

of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kalam, Shangla, Buner, Kohistan, Malakand, Battagram, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Balakot, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda, Peshawar, Bajaur, Mohmand, Orakzai, Khyber, Kohat, Kurram, Hangu, Waziristan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat and Karak from May 19 to May 23 with occasional gaps. In Punjab and Islamabad, dust-thunderstorm/rain is expected in Murree, Galiyat, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Khushab, Joharabad, Bhakkar, Layyah, Sargodha, Mianwali, Faisalabad, Jhang, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Okara, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Sialkot

and Narowal during the forecast period. Similarly, rain-wind/thunderstorm activity is likely in Gilgit-Baltistan districts including Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche and Shigar, while various areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir including Neelum Valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber and Mirpur are also expected to receive rain with gusty winds and thunderstorms till May 23 with occasional gaps. The PMD warned that windstorms and lightning may damage weak structures including electric poles, billboards and solar panels during the forecast period.—APP

SECP issues digital finance licenses

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has taken major steps to promote innovation and digital transformation in Pakistan's financial sector by issuing the country's first Shariah-compliant digital general takaful operator license to First Digital Takaful Company Limited and the first Digital Investment Advisory Services license to Wealthbridge Management Limited. The SECP also licensed Punjab Life Insurance Limited as Pakistan's first provincial government-owned life insurance company for the Punjab Health Initiative Program. During the last three months, since the

new management took charge, the SECP has significantly reduced the pending application backlog despite operational challenges. The Commission had 729 outstanding licensing applications, while another 414 fresh applications were received during the period, taking the total caseload to 1,143 applications. Out of these, 510 applications were disposed of, reducing the pending cases to 633. The disposed applications included 84 license applications, 20 prior permissions, 53 approvals for Boards of Directors and CEOs, 264 license renewals, seven share transfer cases, and 45 other approvals, while 37 cases were closed due

to withdrawal, lack of response from applicants, or non-fulfillment of regulatory requirements. As part of these reforms, the cumbersome requirement of prior security clearance for foreign individuals applying for licenses is being removed. The SECP is also rationalizing documentary requirements for Section 42 companies to facilitate the non-profit sector and improve the incorporation process. The reforms are part of the SECP's broader strategy to modernize Pakistan's financial regulatory framework, facilitate innovation, encourage foreign participation, and strengthen digital regulatory infrastructure.—APP

Pak launches sub-national Polio vaccination drive

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan, through the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) for Polio Eradication, has launched a Sub-National Polio Vaccination Campaign across 79 selected high-risk districts. The drive was launched as part of intensified national efforts to stop poliovirus transmission and protect millions of children from lifelong paralysis. Running from 18-24 May, the campaign aims to vaccinate approximately 19 million children under the age of five through administration of the safe and effective oral polio vaccine. More than 160,000 trained frontline workers will fan out across the country, going door-to-door to ensure every eligible child receives lifesaving protection. The campaign is being implemented simultaneously in Pakistan and Afghanistan, reflecting strengthened cross-border coordination and a shared commitment to ending poliovirus transmission in one of the world's last remaining endemic regions. Provincial coverage includes 10 districts in Punjab, where 6.19 million children will be vaccinated, 20 districts in Sindh, targeting 5.79 million children, 23 districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, reaching 4.61 million children, and 25 districts in Balochistan, where 1.99 million children will receive polio drops. In Islamabad, more than 460,000 children are also being targeted during the campaign. Pakistan's fight against polio has come a long way. When the national eradication effort began in 1994,

the country reported more than 20,000 cases annually. Through decades of sustained vaccination campaigns, strengthened surveillance systems and coordinated public health action, the country has dramatically reduced the burden of disease. The progress continues to show results. Pakistan recorded 31 cases in 2025, while only three confirmed cases have been reported so far in 2026 - a significant decline that reflects the country's momentum toward eradication. However, health authorities warn that the virus continues to circulate silently in some areas, making sustained vaccination efforts essential. "Pakistan stands at a decisive moment in its journey toward a polio-free future," the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) said. "While progress has been encouraging, every missed child remains an opportunity for the virus to survive and spread." Health authorities emphasized that repeated vaccination remains critical because each dose strengthens a child's immunity and helps stop transmission, particularly in high-risk and mobile populations. The Government of Pakistan acknowledged the continued support of Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners - including WHO, UNICEF, CDC, Rotary International and the Gates Foundation - alongside provincial governments, frontline workers, security personnel, community leaders and local partners whose collective efforts remain central to reaching every child.—APP

NPO to organize webinar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Productivity Organization (NPO) is going to organize a webinar on "Global Trends in Climate Change and Just Transition" on May 20 (Wednesday). The course is designed to equip participants with practical knowledge on climate change strategies, sustainable enterprise practices and the concept of a just transition towards a low-carbon economy, said NPO document shared here on Monday. The workshop will cover global climate change trends and impacts, international policy frameworks, enterprise decarbonization strategies, sustainable business models and global best practices for building resilient and future-ready enterprises.

The initiative is part of ongoing efforts to promote sustainability, climate resilience and green enterprise development in line with emerging international environmental and economic trends.

Rescue 1122 conducts pre-monsoon water rescue drills

RAWALPINDI: Rescue 1122, Murree, on Monday, conducted special water rescue drills at Rawal Dam as part of pre-monsoon preparedness measures aimed at improving emergency response to flooding and water-related incidents. According to the Rescue 1122 spokesman, the exercises were carried out on the directives of Secretary Emergency Services Punjab Dr Rizwan Naseer, Sitara-Imtiaz, and the District Disaster Management Authority. The drills were intended to strengthen advanced preparedness, rapid response capability and the professional skills of rescue personnel to effectively handle possible flash floods, overflowing rivers and canals, landslides and drowning incidents during the monsoon season. During the exercises, rescue teams received practical training in search-and-rescue operations, swift-water rescue techniques, and the use of rescue boats, life jackets, ropes and other safety equipment to evacuate affected people to safer locations. Officials also carried out a detailed inspection of water rescue equipment and emergency machinery to ensure timely and effective action during emergencies. Rescue 1122 spokesman said all rescue teams would remain on high alert throughout the monsoon season, while special monitoring would continue at dams, waterfalls, and other high-risk areas. Additional personnel were also being deployed at tourist destinations to enable immediate response in the event of accidents, he added. He urged citizens and tourists to avoid bathing in unsafe locations, taking selfies near water bodies and approaching fast-flowing streams or rivers. Parents were advised to keep a close watch on children and observe precautionary measures in view of changing weather conditions. Citizens were also asked to report emergencies immediately at the Rescue 1122 helpline.—DNA

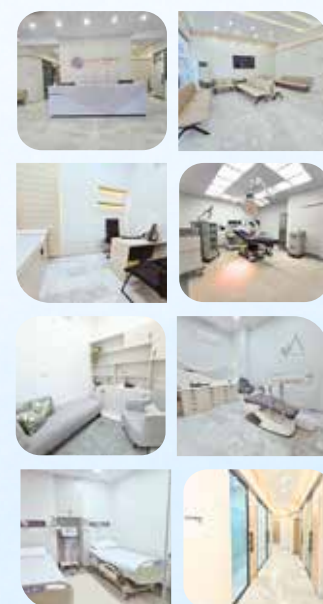
Inflation has broken backbone of poor: Nusrat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Political and social leader Nusrat Khan stated that after the attack on Iran by the United States and Israel, it is essential to closely monitor the changes taking place at both regional and global levels. In a statement, she said that under the current circumstances, while Pakistan appears to have numerous opportunities for construction and development, the existence of complex challenges cannot be ignored. Nusrat Khan further said that whether it is the tense situation with Afghanistan or the persistent atmosphere of hostility with India, wisdom demands that attention be focused on internal stability. He also expressed concern over the recent wave of terrorism in Baluchistan and Kpk. The political and social leader further stated that rising inflation has broken the backs of the people. Therefore, the time has come to genuinely address the problems and difficulties faced by the common man; otherwise.



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Briefs

WAPDA hydel generation surpasses 6000 MW

ISLAMABAD: With increased indent by Indus River System Authority (IRSA) from the water reservoirs, WAPDA hydel generation surpassed 6000 MW, as its Hydel Power Stations provided 6118 MW electricity to the National Grid during peak hours last night. According to the details, Tarbela Hydel Power Station contributed 2332 MW, Tarbela 4th Extension 1095 MW, Ghazi Barotha 1160 MW, Mangla 930 MW, Warsak 135 MW, Chashma 101 MW; while remaining 365 MW electricity was generated by WAPDA's other medium and small Hydel Power Stations, said a message received here on Monday. It is important to note that WAPDA's hydel electricity is the most affordable clean and green energy in the National Grid and it subsidises the entire Energy Sector in Pakistan.—APP

Police deploy over 900 personnel

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Police has deployed more than 900 officers and personnel to provide security during the four-day anti-polio campaign started across the district on Monday. According to the police spokesman, security arrangements have been made for 686 polio teams operating throughout the district, while protection was also being provided at 352 transit points and 232 fixed vaccination centres. Police mobiles, the Elite Squad and Dolphin Force were conducting patrols in various areas to ensure smooth implementation of the campaign and maintain law and order. The spokesman reiterated that Rawalpindi Police remained committed to protecting the lives and property of citizens and ensuring a secure environment for public health initiatives.—APP

CCP approves CDC investment

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) here on Monday approved the proposed investment by the Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDC) in Naymat Collateral Management Company Limited (NCMCL) following a Phase-I review conducted under the Competition Act, 2010. CDC had submitted a pre-merger application to the Commission under Section 11 of the Act, seeking approval for the subscription of additional ordinary shares in NCMCL. Following a competition assessment, the Commission authorized the transaction, allowing CDC to acquire additional shareholding in the company. CDC, established in 1993, is one of Pakistan's key capital market institutions, providing electronic custody of securities, settlement facilitation and related depository services. NCMCL, incorporated in 2020, operates as a collateral management company registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan for accreditation and oversight of warehouses operating under the country's Electronic Warehouse Receipt framework. In its assessment, the Commission defined the relevant market as "collateral management and warehousing oversight services" within Pakistan. The Commission concluded that the deal would not significantly alter competition dynamics because the two companies operate in separate and unrelated business segments. The Commission noted that the acquisition neither constituted horizontal nor vertical integration, reducing the likelihood of anti-competitive effects such as market foreclosure or collusion. It further concluded that the transaction would not create entry barriers or substantially lessen competition in the market. The CCP formally authorized the transaction under Section 31 of the Competition Act.—APP

ICCI hosts session on Islamabad's water challenges

Sardar Khan Zimri informed the participants that Islamabad currently requires around 120 million gallons of water daily against the available supply of nearly 80 million gallons

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Director General Water, Capital Development Authority (CDA), Sardar Khan Zimri, has said that CDA is implementing comprehensive short-term and long-term strategies to address Islamabad's growing water challenges and ensure sustainable water supply. He said several mega projects have been initiated to bridge the widening gap between water demand and supply. He expressed these views during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry where he held an interactive session with members of the business community representing various sectors of trade and industry. Sardar Khan Zimri informed the participants that Islamabad currently requires around 120 million gallons of water daily against the available supply of nearly 80 million gallons. To overcome the shortfall, CDA has launched multiple major projects including Shahdara Dam, Dhotara Dam upstream of Khanpur Dam and a mega initiative to bring 100 million gallons of water from Tarbela to Islamabad. He termed the Tarbela project a long-term solution for the future needs of the city and said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has constituted a task force under the Chairmanship of Interior Minister to oversee the mega projects as well as the water and sewerage issues. He stated that Shahdara Dam is expected to be completed within one and a half to two years while significant progress on other projects would also be visible in the next three to four years. The DG Water said CDA is simultaneously focusing on improving operational efficiency by reducing water losses caused by leakages and outdated infrastructure. He noted that around 25 to 30 percent of water is currently wasted due to leakages and the authority aims to reduce these losses to 15 to 20 percent through rehabilitation of damaged pipelines and modernization of the network system. He further said CDA is upgrading small waterworks like Shahdara, Ssid Pur and Barri Imam and taking practical measures for groundwater conservation through rainwater harvesting initiatives. He added that the authority plans to expand rainwater harvesting to the household level and awareness material would be distributed among citizens to promote water conservation practices. He added that as the short term measure we are going to outsource all the tube-wells to enhance their efficiency. Sardar Khan Zimri said CDA is also enhancing tanker services in water-deficient sectors including efforts to improve operational capacity despite budgetary and staffing challenges. He informed the participants that CDA has signed agreements with the World Bank for long-term reforms in Islamabad's water management aimed at improving efficiency, maintenance and sustainable utilization of resources. He also highlighted



cooperation with international partners, including a French development agency, for the rehabilitation of the Simly Water Treatment Plant, which is expected to be completed within two years. The DG Water also acknowledged the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for preparing a comprehensive master plan for Islamabad's future water infrastructure and supply requirements for the next 50 years. Responding to concerns regarding contamination caused by mixing of sewage and drinking water, Sardar Khan Zimri said CDA immediately responds to complaints by disconnecting affected lines and providing free tanker services to residents until issues are resolved. He attributed such problems to the aging infrastructure where sewage and water supply lines run parallel to each other. Earlier, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sardar Tahir Mehmood, in his welcome address, appreciated the dedication

and accessibility of Sardar Khan Zimri in addressing the concerns of residents and the business community. He highlighted key water-related issues faced by the city and emphasized the need for timely completion of all ongoing water projects to meet the growing needs of Islamabad. Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, former ICCI Presidents Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, Zahid Maqbool Basir Daud and President Council for Water Preservation and former Senior Vice President Mehmood Warich also shared their views and suggestions on improving water management and civic services in the capital. Executive Members Waqar Chaudhry, Ishaq Sial, Sanaullah Durrani, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Rohail Anwar Butt, former Senior Vice President Khalid Chaudhry, Tahir Abbasi, former Executive Member Zakria Zia, Abbas Hashmi and a large number of representatives of industry and market associations attended the session and took part in question and answer.

OGRA conducts public hearing on SSGCL petition

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) conducted public hearing on the SSGCL's petition for Determination of its Estimated Revenue Requirement / prescribed price for FY 2026-27. The petitioner in its revised petition dated 28-04-2026 has projected aggregate Average Prescribed Price at Rs. 6,825.30 per MMBTU including interest on GDS receivable (Rs. 1,721.47/MMBTU) & previous year shortfall up to FY 2024-25 (Rs. 2,920.46/MMBTU) for indigenous natural gas business. The petitioner has also projected Rs. 199.03/MMBTU w.r.t RLNG cost of supply for FY 2026-27. The public hearing was attended by all stakeholders including general public to pass their views/comments for final decision by the Authority. The final decision shall be issued by the Authority in due course of time.

SC commutes death sentences of 3 convicts to life imprisonment

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has issued a detailed judgment in the kidnapping and murder case of five-year-old Umar Rathore, commuting the death sentences of three convicts to life imprisonment. The apex court also dismissed an appeal challenging the acquittal of co-accused Asad Mumtaz. Justice Ishaq Ibrahim authored the detailed verdict, observing that the prosecution had established the case through circumstantial evidence and a chain of incriminating circumstances rather than direct eyewitness testimony. However, the court held that certain doubts in the record did not satisfy the legal threshold required to sustain the death penalty. According to the judgment, the Supreme Court converted the death sentences of Aftab Zafar, Hamza Jahangir and Muhammad Yasir into life imprisonment. The court also directed the three convicts to pay compensation of Rs500,000 each to the legal heirs of the deceased child. The court observed that the remaining doubt in the prosecution case entitled the accused to the benefit of doubt to the extent of the sentence, resulting in the conversion of capital punishment into life imprisonment.—APP

NUML's Jinnah the Great Series to mark Quaid's birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Modern Languages launched the "Jinnah the Great Series" as part of the nationwide celebrations marking the 150th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The inaugural session, organized under the NUML Mehfil Forum, was held under the patronage of Rector NUML, Major General (r) Shahid Mahmood Kayani, with the objective of acquainting younger generations with the vision, leadership, and enduring principles of the Founder of Pakistan. Renowned historian and biographer of Quaid-e-Azam, Riaz Ahmad, along with Pakistani-American physician, philanthropist, and founder of the Quaid-e-Azam Foundation USA, Dr. Asaf Riyaz Qadeer, attended the event as guest speakers. Deans, directors, faculty members, and a large number of students participated in the seminar. The ceremony commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Qari Syed Sadaqat Ali. Delivering the keynote address, Riaz Ahmad highlighted the historical journey leading to the creation of Pakistan and elaborated on the pivotal role played by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in transforming Allama Iqbal's vision into reality. He emphasized the continued relevance of Quaid-e-Azam's principles of unity, constitutionalism, and democratic values, urging the youth to follow the teachings and legacy of the Founder of the Nation. He remarked that Pakistan came into existence by the will of Allah and would continue to endure with strength and resilience. Addressing the participants, Dr. Asaf Riyaz Qadeer stated that Quaid-e-Azam was not merely a political leader but an ideology symbolizing character, commitment, and vision. He expressed optimism in the younger generation, describing them as the future of Pakistan. He noted that Quaid-e-Azam was among the rare leaders who changed the destiny of an entire nation by giving the Muslims of the subcontinent not only an independent homeland but also a distinct identity. He stressed that education without character remains incomplete and observed that the true strength of Pakistan lies in its youth. In his concluding remarks, Rector NUML Major General (r) Shahid Mahmood Kayani reiterated that the "Jinnah the Great Series" is a long-term intellectual initiative aimed at reviving awareness of Quaid-e-Azam's ideals among students through scholarly discussions and cultural activities. The event concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session in which students actively participated and appreciated the initiative as a meaningful academic contribution by NUML towards promoting the thought and vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.—DNA

Pakistan-China disaster warning symposium hosted

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Monday opened the 2nd Pak-China Symposium on Early Warning for Hydrological and Geological Disasters in Islamabad, bringing together policymakers, scientists, diplomats, UN agencies and international experts to strengthen regional cooperation on climate resilience, disaster preparedness and multi-hazard risk management. The two day symposium, being held at NDMA headquarters from May 18 to 19, also featured the launch of a report titled "Global Best Practices for Disaster Mitigation and Management", aimed at improving Pakistan's disaster response framework through international models and lessons. Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal attended the inaugural session as chief guest and warned that climate change had become one of the defining challenges of the century, requiring stronger preparedness, scientific innovation and institutional coordination. He stressed the need to strengthen provincial capacities and coordination with NDMA for timely early warning dissemination, emergency response and post-disaster recovery operations. Mr Iqbal said Pakistan faced growing threats from glacier lake outburst floods (GLOFs), flash floods, landslides, earthquakes, heatwaves and other extreme weather events, add-

ing that disaster resilience must be integrated into national development planning through science-based policymaking and technological modernisation. In his keynote address, NDMA Chairman Inam Haider Malik said the authority was shifting from reactive disaster response to a preparedness-driven and anticipatory disaster management system. He highlighted the shared geography of the Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Himalayan region, saying Pakistan and China faced common risks due to tectonic fault lines, glacier-fed rivers and strategic infrastructure along the Karakoram belt, making operational cooperation essential. Representatives from the Chinese Embassy reaffirmed support for deeper bilateral cooperation in disaster management, scientific research and technological innovation. Experts from Pakistani and Chinese institutions presented research on glacier monitoring, flood forecasting, landslide and seismic hazards, artificial intelligence, geospatial technologies and digital disaster resilience during technical sessions held as part of the symposium. The event was attended by diplomats, researchers, development partners, students, UN representatives and disaster management practitioners, reflecting growing international collaboration on climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E Jiang Zaidong called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on 18 May 2026. Bilateral relations between Pakistan and China were discussed in the meeting. — DNA

Kundi, Saleem discuss flour supply issue, Pindi killings

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi held a meeting with Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan here on Monday and discussed the situation arising from restrictions on the transportation of flour from Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as matters related to law and order and inter-provincial harmony. During the meeting, Governor Kundi thanked the Punjab Governor for his positive sentiments towards Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and appreciated his support regarding issues being faced by the province. The two leaders also exchanged views on the prevailing political situation, organizational affairs of the Pakistan Peoples Party and other matters of mutual interest. In a separate meeting, Governor Kundi accompanied a Pashtun tribal jirga to meet Governor Punjab regarding the killing of two youths, Siraj Mehsud and Zain Shah, in Rawalpindi last week. The jirga was led by senior tribal elder Inayatullah Khan Mehsud. The jirga members discussed the incident and the related situation with the Punjab Governor and stressed the need for maintaining peace and harmony among communities. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Kundi said mutual respect and brotherhood among different communities were essential for the country's development and economic prosperity. He said the Mehsud tribe desired peaceful conditions and shared economic progress, adding that the jirga's visit reflected this spirit. He said Pakistan's progress depended on unity beyond ethnic, linguistic and ideological differences, which was also in line with the teachings of Islam. He added that the grief of the families of the slain youths was shared by the entire nation, saying the loss of young lives was irreparable and collective efforts were needed to prevent such incidents in future.—DNA

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

Calm After Storm: Assessing the Outcomes of the Presidential Visit to China



MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL

THE President of the United States, Donald Trump, has returned to the White House after concluding a two-day official visit to China, an engagement that drew the gaze of capitals worldwide and revived memories of an earlier era in Sino-American diplomacy. Accompanied by a formidable delegation that included senior cabinet ministers and a striking

array of America's leading business tycoons from sectors spanning agriculture, aviation, technology, and energy, the President's journey to Beijing unfolded against a backdrop of global unease. From the troubled waters of the Gulf to the persistent frictions of trade and the delicate strategic balance between the world's foremost powers, the conversations in Zhongnanhai touched upon matters of profound consequence for the international order. In the measured exchanges between President Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping, several pressing issues rose to the fore. The volatile situation in the Gulf, where disruptions linked to the conflict involving Iran have imperiled the free flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz, commanded serious attention. Both sides, according to accounts from those present, affirmed the imperative of keeping vital sea lanes open to commerce, lest higher energy prices and supply shortages inflict fresh wounds upon the world economy. There appeared to be a shared understanding that no single actor should be permitted to acquire nuclear capabilities capable of further inflaming the region, a stance that may help ease immediate pressures on global markets even as underlying tensions linger.

Trade and economic cooperation, long a source of both opportunity and contention, formed another pillar of the discussions. President Trump spoke warmly of "fantastic trade deals" beneficial to both nations, with indications that China may move forward with substantial purchases of American agricultural goods such as soybeans and beef, alongside commitments for around two hundred Boeing aircraft. New mechanisms, including proposed boards for trade and investment, were discussed as avenues for sustained dialogue, offering hope for incremental progress in market access and supply chain stability. Yet observers noted the absence of sweeping tariff resolutions or transformative agreements on technology and rare earth minerals, suggesting a preference for pragmatic stabilization over bold resets. The presence of



billionaire executives underscored the administration's desire to embed commercial realism more deeply into diplomatic efforts, weaving together the interests of state and enterprise. On the enduring question of Taiwan, the tone remained characteristically cautious. Chinese leaders reiterated with firmness that the matter represents a core interest, cautioning that any misstep—particularly concerning American arms sales—could lead to dangerous clashes. For the American side, emphasis was placed on the value of peace and stability across the strait, with President Trump indicating that decisions on pending defense packages would be weighed carefully in the coming weeks. No breakthroughs were announced, but the very fact of candid exchange may serve to manage differences and prevent escalation, preserving the delicate equilibrium that has thus far averted outright crisis.

Beyond these specific concerns, the visit carried broader significance for the relationship between the two great powers. Formal meetings were complemented by symbolic gestures: a banquet marked by mutual expressions of respect, a visit to the Temple of Heaven that evoked cultural appreciation, and an invitation extended by President Trump for President Xi to visit the White House in September. Such personal diplomacy, while sometimes viewed through a skeptical lens, can foster the personal rapport that eases future negotiations amid inevitable rivalry. Analyses in respected journals and established newspapers portray the summit as one of cautious optimism—modest steps toward predictability rather than a grand reconciliation.

In the days since the President's return, commentators have sifted through the signals for clues to the future. On the economic front, the groundwork laid for increased purchases and dialogue mechanisms may yield tangible gains for American farmers, manufacturers, and exporters, provided political momentum endures. In the Gulf, coordinated diplomatic efforts could help restore more reliable energy flows, offering relief to consumers and industries burdened by recent uncertainties. Strategic competition, particularly in technology and the Indo-Pacific, will likely continue along familiar lines of guarded engagement, where both nations pursue their interests with resolve yet seek to avoid outright confrontation. History reminds us that relations between such formidable powers are seldom altered in a single stroke. This visit, though rich in symbolism and modest in concrete outcomes, represents an important chapter in an ongoing narrative shaped as much by interdependence as by competition. As Washington and Beijing chart their courses in the months ahead, the world will watch closely to see whether the understandings reached in Beijing translate into enduring stability. For the present, the prevailing view among seasoned diplomats and analysts is one of measured hope: a temporary calming of waters in a relationship that remains as consequential as any in our time, with the harder labor of sustained cooperation still lying before both nations. In the grand arena of global affairs, such deliberate and careful steps may ultimately prove more lasting than dramatic but ephemeral gestures.

Israel and the US Retreat as Iran Emerges Victorious

Qamar Bashir



Israel also faced devastating consequences.

The Israeli economy contracted sharply during the conflict, with reduced tourism, falling investment, declining consumer confidence, and repeated disruptions caused by missile attacks and mobilization costs.

Israeli businesses faced uncertainty while infrastructure and military spending strained public finances. More importantly, Israel failed to achieve its central strategic objectives. Iran's government remained intact. Iran's missile and drone capabilities survived.

Regional resistance networks in Lebanon and Gaza remained operational

IN a stunning admission that has reshaped the geopolitical narrative of the Middle East, President Donald Trump and U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth effectively acknowledged the end of America's direct military campaign against Iran. Declaring that "Epic Fury" had ended for all practical purposes and that "Operation Freedom" was now in effect, the United States quietly shifted from aggressive military confrontation to strategic disengagement. Yet the most revealing statement came from Secretary Hegseth himself, who openly stated that the United States no longer considered the Strait of Hormuz its responsibility because America was not dependent on the waterway for its energy needs. According to Hegseth, those nations suffering from the closure of Hormuz should themselves use whatever diplomatic or military tools they possess to reopen the route.

This statement amounted to far more than a tactical adjustment. To many observers across the globe, it sounded like an open acknowledgment of strategic failure. The very war initiated by Israel and the United States had triggered the instability that closed Hormuz in the first place, yet now both powers appeared eager to walk away from the consequences while the rest of the world continued to suffer.

Before the war, the Strait of Hormuz functioned as one of the world's most critical energy arteries, carrying nearly 20 percent of global oil shipments and a substantial portion of liquefied natural gas exports. The closure and militarization of the region following the conflict sent shockwaves through the global economy. Oil prices surged beyond \$140 per barrel at several points during the crisis, while shipping insurance premiums multiplied several times over. Freight costs skyrocketed, disrupting global trade routes from Asia to Europe and Africa. What began as a military operation against Iran evolved into a worldwide economic earthquake affecting virtually every continent. Asia bore some of the heaviest economic consequences. China, India, Japan, South Korea, Pakistan, and many Southeast Asian economies depend heavily on Gulf energy supplies. The disruption in oil shipments dramatically increased manufacturing costs, transportation expenses, and inflation across the region. China reportedly absorbed economic losses exceeding \$400 billion through disrupted supply chains, higher energy costs, and slowing exports. India, already struggling with inflationary pressures, saw fuel prices surge and industrial growth slow sharply. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and other developing Asian economies faced intensified economic distress as energy imports became unaffordable. Millions of vulnerable households across Asia were pushed deeper into poverty due to rising food, electricity, and transportation prices. Europe also paid a heavy price for the war. Already weakened by years of economic slowdown, energy inse-

curity, and the lingering consequences of the Ukraine conflict, European economies suffered severe inflationary pressure from rising oil and gas prices. Germany's industrial sector, heavily dependent on stable energy costs, experienced declining production. France, Italy, and Spain faced rising transportation and manufacturing expenses. Analysts estimated Europe's direct and indirect war-related economic losses in the range of \$350 to \$500 billion through reduced growth, inflation, trade disruption, and financial instability. European stock markets experienced repeated volatility as investors feared prolonged instability in the Middle East.

Africa, despite having no involvement in the war itself, became one of its greatest humanitarian victims. Many African nations rely heavily on imported fuel and food. The spike in shipping and energy prices sharply increased the cost of basic necessities. Countries already struggling with debt, unemployment, and food insecurity faced worsening humanitarian crises. Transportation costs surged across East and West Africa, while inflation reduced purchasing power for millions of ordinary citizens. International aid agencies warned that the war indirectly pushed millions more people below the poverty line across Africa. South America similarly experienced major economic disruption. Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and other economies dependent on global commodity markets suffered from rising shipping costs, weakening trade flows, and market uncertainty. Airlines across Latin America struggled with increased jet fuel prices, while agricultural exports became more expensive to transport. Currency volatility intensified as investors shifted toward safe-haven assets amid fears of broader global instability.

Even the United States itself suffered enormous economic consequences. While Washington argued that it was less dependent on Gulf oil, the integrated nature of the global economy meant that rising energy costs affected all Americans. Gasoline prices climbed sharply, mortgage rates remained elevated, airline costs increased, and supply chains faced renewed disruption. U.S. military expenditures surged into hundreds of billions of dollars as naval deployments, missile defense systems, logistics operations, and regional base protection consumed vast financial resources. The Congressional Budget Office and independent analysts estimated that the broader economic cost of the war to the United States could ultimately exceed \$1 trillion when inflationary pressures, military spending, market instability, and indirect economic damage are included. Israel also faced devastating consequences. The Israeli economy contracted sharply during the conflict, with reduced tourism, falling investment, declining consumer confidence, and repeated disruptions caused by missile attacks and mobilization costs. Israeli businesses faced uncertainty while infrastructure and military spending strained public finances.

More importantly, Israel failed to achieve its central strategic objectives. Iran's government remained intact. Iran's missile and drone capabilities survived. Regional resistance networks in Lebanon and Gaza remained operational. Instead of emerging weakened, Iran emerged emboldened.

Indeed, the most profound geopolitical consequence of the war may be Iran's transformed regional position. After surviving months of coordinated military pressure from both Israel and the United States, Tehran dramatically shifted its position. Iranian leaders now argue openly that negotiations can no longer revolve around limiting Iran's capabilities. Instead, Tehran demands reparations for war damage, reconstruction of oil infrastructure, compensation for civilian casualties, recognition of Iranian sovereignty over Hormuz security arrangements, and an end to Israeli military operations in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and surrounding territories.

From Tehran's perspective, the war proved that Iran could withstand the combined power of the United States and Israel while continuing to exert regional influence. Across much of the Global South, Iran increasingly presents itself as a symbol of resistance against Western military dominance. Even countries that do not politically align with Iran privately acknowledge that the conflict exposed the limits of American and Israeli military power in the twenty-first century. Perhaps the clearest evidence of strategic failure lies in the final political reality itself. After months of military escalation, trillions in economic damage, global inflation, disrupted trade, and regional instability, the United States and Israel are now seeking disengagement while Iran stands politically unbroken. Washington's own leadership now publicly signals that Hormuz is no longer America's problem. Yet the closure of Hormuz was itself a direct consequence of the war launched by Israel and the United States.

History may ultimately remember this conflict not as a triumph of military power, but as a case study in strategic overreach. The United States and Israel entered the war promising deterrence, dominance, and regional transformation. Instead, they triggered global economic pain, strengthened Iran's geopolitical standing, weakened confidence in Western leadership, and exposed the limitations of military force in an interconnected world. Today, while Washington and Tel Aviv search for an exit from the crisis, Iran stands defiant, presenting itself as the side that endured, resisted, and survived.

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

Kashmir: Memory, Martyrdom, and an Unresolved Question

Abdul Wassay

The story of the 13 July 1931 Kashmir uprising starts outside the Central Jail of Srinagar. Thousands of Kashmiris gathered to witness the trial of freedom activist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who was accused of sedition for delivering a fiery speech against Dogra occupation. Tension rose when one man stood to deliver the "Azan" in an act of defiance toward Dogra rule, but was shot dead by state forces. Dogra police martyred 22 people as, one after another, individuals rose to complete the Azan. This act of defiance against tyranny transformed into a defining symbol...

EVERY year, Kashmir Martyrs' Day is observed on 13 July to commemorate the indiscriminate killings of Muslims under the Maharaja Hari Singh's rule. For Kashmiris, it symbolises a sustained struggle for rights, recognition, and independence. On this day, Kashmiris stood up against injustice and paid with their lives. That legacy of resistance, along with the demand for political and civil rights, continues to endure. This day is not just about remembering those sacrifices but also understanding why the struggle still continues.

The story of the 13 July 1931 Kashmir uprising starts outside the Central Jail of Srinagar. Thousands of Kashmiris gathered to witness the trial of freedom activist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who was accused of sedition for delivering a fiery speech against Dogra occupation. Tension rose when one man stood to deliver the "Azan" in an act of defiance toward Dogra rule, but was shot dead by state forces. Dogra police martyred 22 people as, one after another, individuals rose to complete the Azan. This act of defiance against tyranny transformed into a defining symbol of collective resistance, and it firmly embedded martyrdom into Kashmir's political consciousness. This act started the organised struggle against the rule of oppression that continues to this day in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In the past 95 years, this organised struggle against systemic repression has produced multiple martyrs, including Burhan Wani, Abdul Ahad Guru, Ashfaq Majeed, Tuffail Ahmed, Ghulam Mohammad Lone, and others. Many peaceful political activists, like Yasin Malik, Asiya Andrabi, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, Khurram Parvez, Masarat Alam Bhat, and others, are also detained under the draconian laws of India. This shows that the issue is not episodic but structural. Across generations, the Kashmiri political resistance has

faced indiscriminate killings, detentions, and torture. Since the abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian Hindutva regime in 2019, the government has imposed severe restrictions such as lockdowns, communication blackouts, detentions, and targeted operations against freedom fighters. The oppressive regime has also stopped the public remembrance of the 13 July martyrs by removing the holiday from the official calendar. This is a blatant attempt to erase historical memory. Authorities have also blocked visits to the Srinagar graveyard, where those martyrs are buried. This shows that the Indian regime is afraid of the people of Kashmir. In the Kashmiri struggle against occupation, mourning is seen as a political act of resistance, not just a cultural or religious activity.

The Indian regime has systematically restricted the mourning of Kashmiri political activists. For example, one of the most influential freedom activists, Syed Ali Gillani, who died under Indian illegal detention, was buried in a tightly controlled, pre-dawn ceremony in 2021, just hours after his death. Police snatched his body and forced his burial without the presence of his family. Authorities implemented a strict security crackdown and communication blackout across IIOJK to prevent mass gathering, fearing his death would trigger large-scale anti-India protests. Commemorating Kashmir Martyrs' Day, in this sense, becomes a day of resisting historical erasure and reinterpretation.

Kashmir's long history of struggle and martyrdom is a continuation of legitimate political demands for rights, recognition, and dignity, which remain unaddressed. Kashmir Martyrs' Day also reminds the world that the core political question of the future of IIOJK remains open and unanswered. The sacrifices made over generations

will continue to shape the collective memory and identity of the Kashmiri people. The people of Pakistan share in the grief and stand in solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren.

The Pakistani government also continues to play its part by consistently highlighting, at all relevant international forums, that Jammu and Kashmir is an unresolved international dispute. This has been reflected in multiple United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) like UNSCR 47, 51, 80, 91, and others. Pakistan will continue to support the Kashmir cause politically, morally, and diplomatically, and will not let the blood of Kashmiri martyrs go to waste. On this Kashmir Martyrs' Day, there is a need for renewed commitment to support Kashmir's struggle for self-determination and justice. Pakistan will also continue to raise this issue at all forums to ensure a peaceful and just resolution in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Kashmir Martyrs' Day is not just about the past, but also about the present, where the core question remains unresolved, and the future is still being contested. The memory of the martyrs of the 1931 massacre and the decades that followed continues to shape the political consciousness of the people of Kashmir to keep the demands for rights and self-determination alive. Attempts by oppressive Indian authorities to suppress the freedom struggle, silence the remembrance of martyrs, and redefine history cannot erase the lived experience of the Kashmiri people. As long as these grievances remain unaddressed, the call for justice will continue across generations that refuse to forget.

— Abdul Wassay is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) Lahore. He can be reached at info@casslhr.com

Briefs

No plan to raise Voting age to 25

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citizen can be enrolled as a voter if they are at least 18 years of age on January 1 of the year in which electoral rolls are prepared or revised. It is also required that the person is, or is deemed to be, a resident of the relevant electoral area in order to be registered as a voter there. Earlier today, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, while reacting to the reports, said he did not believe the matter was a "serious proposal". "According to the United Nations, people between the ages of 15 and 29 are considered youth," he told reporters in Parliament House, warning that depriving 18-year-olds of the right to vote would affect the democratic process. Separately, JUI-F's Kamran Murtaza said an 18-year-old should retain the right to vote if they are legally recognised as adults. "If an 18-year-old person can get married, then they should also have the right to vote," he said, adding that a person mature enough to understand marriage could also understand the law. The lawmakers' statements come amid rumours about another constitutional amendment. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar last Saturday said that any constitutional amendment process will only proceed with consensus, adding there were currently no signs of a 28th Amendment. "We are a coalition government; how can we proceed with constitutional amendments without consultation?" he said during a media interaction in Lahore.

No surge in power tariff in June

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a potential additional burden worth around Rs38 billion has been avoided through timely measures. The spokesperson stated that the monthly fuel adjustment hike has been contained at Rs1.73 per unit, preventing a sharper rise in electricity tariffs. He further said continuity of energy policies, rising electricity demand and a targeted special package contributed to overall relief for the power consumers. The spokesperson added that additional local gas availability and increased output from imported coal-based plants helped ease load management pressures. In the first quarter, electricity consumers received refunds amounting to Rs65 billion, while a quarterly adjustment delivered relief of Rs1.93 per unit, as per the spokesperson. The spokesperson said this adjustment effectively neutralised the impact of monthly fuel costs and ensured further relief despite difficult operational conditions.

Pakistan condemns drone...

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grave violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, the UN Charter, and the fundamental principles of nuclear safety and security enshrined in the Statute and resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It added that nuclear installations "must never be targeted under any circumstances", adding "such reckless actions carry potentially catastrophic and irreversible consequences for human life, the environment, and regional as well as global peace and security". "The inviolability of civilian nuclear infrastructure is a well-established international norm and must be upheld without exception," the FO said. "Pakistan calls upon all parties to exercise maximum restraint, fulfil their obligations under international law and international humanitarian law, and avoid any actions that could further escalate tensions with consequences extending far beyond the region," it said. "Dialogue and diplomacy, consistent with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, remain the only viable path toward lasting peace, stability, and de-escalation in the region," the FO concluded.

FPCCI delegation calls on FM Aurangzeb

President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh present the Federation's draft budget proposals to Federal Minister Finance and described the budget proposals as a comprehensive and viable roadmap designed to address Pakistan's ongoing economic challenges

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), led by Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, ECO CCI, Senior Vice President SAARC CCI and Vice President CACCI met with the Federal Minister for Finance Mr. Muhammad Orangaib at Finance Division Islamabad. The delegation comprised by Senior Vice President FPCCI Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Vice Presidents Mr. Tariq Jadoon, Mr. Asif Sakhi, and Aman Paracha, Chairman FPCCI Policy Advisory Board Mian Zahid Hussain, Chairman PVMA Mr. Umer Rehan Sheikh, Former President FPCCI Mr. Ghazanfar Bilour, Incharge FPCCI Capital Office Mr. Karim Aziz Malik, Chairman Coordination Capital Office Malik Sohail Hussain, Chairman Pakistan Cotton Ginners' Association Sham Lal Mangani and others. During the meeting, the delegation highlighted critical issues faced by the business community. Discussions focused on the Final Tax Regime, super tax, income tax and sales tax refunds, further tax, the POS system, and concerns regarding the powers of field formations. The representatives also



briefed the minister on specific challenges impacting the cotton and edible oil sectors. President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh present the Federation's draft budget proposals to Federal Minister Finance and described the budget proposals as a comprehensive and viable roadmap designed to address Pakistan's ongoing economic challenges. He urged the

government to give serious consideration to the federation's recommendations and to integrate them directly into the upcoming budget planning. He then provided the Finance Minister with a detailed briefing on the specific proposals included in the document. The Finance Minister commended the FPCCI President and his team for their

efforts in preparing the proposals, describing the business community's feedback as highly positive. The minister stated that the government firmly believes in meaningful consultation and assured the delegation that the federation's recommendations would serve as a valuable guide in the preparation of the federal budget.

Mazhar Thathal leads Pakistan trade delegation to Paris trade exhibition

DNA

PARIS: In a significant move to bolster bilateral economic ties, the Mazhar Hussain Thathal Chairman/CEO Global Trade and Expo Centre (GTEC) Pakistan successfully led the 5th Pakistan-France Trade and Business Delegation May 2026* to the Foire de Paris trade exhibition in Paris France. The potential trade delegation focused on showcasing Pakistani industrial potential and fostering new collaborations within the French trade market. Chairman Mazhar Thathal and Director of International Trade Liaqat Thathal spearheaded the mission, with the representation of High-level business community including President of Mardan chamber of small traders and indus-

try and senior members of Chambers of Commerce, including Mardan, Sialkot, Haripur, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad, participated in 5th Pakistan Trade Delegation - with the main objective to explore the French consumer market at one of Europe's largest trade fairs and identify innovative business ideas for bilateral investment and trade opportunities. French exhibitors expressed keen interest in Pakistani trade potential, setting the stage for follow-up delegations and long-term industrial partnerships. The Foire de Paris 2026 held at the Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, served as the primary stage for the Pakistani delegation to engage with international innovators. Mazhar Thathal emphasized that this fifth consecutive mis-

sion underscores Pakistan's commitment to the French market and the global standing of GTEC. The delegation members, representing a diverse cross-section of Pakistan's economy through their respective Chambers of Commerce, spent the week analyzing consumer trends and French craftsmanship. Mr. Liaqat Thathal Director of International Trade and Relationships at GTEC, co-led the trade delegation, playing a pivotal role in facilitating B2B meetings and creating a roadmap for future trade initiatives. "Our goal is not just to observe, but to integrate Pakistani quality into the French trade ecosystem and vice versa. The interest shown by French exhibitors and Pakistani business community craftsmanship and industrial capacity is

a testament to growing potential," stated Mr. Mazhar Thathal during a session at the exhibition. The mission focused heavily on "market intelligence," with delegates exploring new business ideas and modern trade practices. Plans are already in motion for a follow-up delegation to solidify the opportunities. By bridging the gap between Pakistani entrepreneurs and the French market, GTEC continues to pave the way for sustainable economic growth and international cooperation. As the exhibition concludes, the consensus among the delegation members from Sialkot, Haripur, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Mardan is clear: the French market offers a wealth of untapped potential for Pakistani exports and collaborative ventures.

Ignoring limitation law amounts to legal error: SC

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan, in an important ruling, has held that ignoring the law of limitation, the legal status of registered documents, and the limits of the High Court's revisional jurisdiction in a property dispute constitutes a serious legal error that may affect the validity of a judgment. The detailed judgment, approved for reporting, was issued by a two-member bench comprising Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan and Justice Shakeel Ahmad after hearing a review petition. According to the judgment, the dispute related to property, where the parties had claimed ownership on the basis of different registered sale deeds and revenue entries. The court observed that the suit was instituted in 2005, whereas the principal documents connected with the dispute dated back to 1978, 1989 and 1991, indicating that the matter had been brought before the court after a considerable delay. The apex court held that the law of limitation carries fundamental importance and that claims filed after unreasonable and unexplained delay become legally non-maintainable. The court stated that disregarding this principle amounts to a legal error. The judgment further noted that registered documents are deemed to constitute public notice under the law and that their remaining unchallenged for a long period strengthens their legal validity. The court also clarified that the revisional jurisdiction of a High Court is limited in scope and does not ordinarily permit reappraisal of evidence or reversal of concurrent findings of the trial court and appellate court unless there is a manifest legal or factual error on the record. The Supreme Court held that these fundamental legal principles had been overlooked in the present case, resulting in a legal error. Allowing the review petition, the apex court set aside the earlier judgment and restored the decisions of the trial court and the appellate court. -APP

Iran, Turkiye intensify diplomatic contacts

FROM PAGE 01
mediation initiatives and its active engagement with regional stakeholders aimed at reducing tensions and encouraging dialogue between rival parties. Diplomatic sources said Pakistan's growing engagement has been welcomed by several regional countries amid fears of a broader confrontation affecting the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf security.

IED blast in Wana kills elder

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the deaths of three individuals on the spot, while four others were wounded. The DPO said unidentified militants had allegedly planted the explosive material near Gulshan Plaza during the night, which later detonated in the morning hours. Soon after the incident, police personnel cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to trace those involved in the attack. Local residents and rescue workers shifted the bodies and injured persons to the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital in Wana for medical treatment and legal formalities. The latest attack comes as the province grapples with terrorism and violence, which has seen a spike since 2021.

Saudi Arabia says three drones intercepted

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taken to safeguard its sovereignty and the safety of citizens and residents. The UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait and Jordan also issued separate statements strongly condemning the drone attack targeting the Kingdom. Jaseem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi, the GCC's Secretary-General, also issued a condemnation against the attack and affirmed Saudi Arabia's security was an integral part of the regional bloc's broader security.

Trump issues dire warning to Iran

FROM PAGE 01
Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. "TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE!" The war has led to an effective blockade of the critical Strait of Hormuz, through which some 20% of global oil exports pass in peacetime, and has drawn neighbours Israel and Lebanon into a deadly side conflict. Iran's clerical state, Hezbollah's patron, has demanded a lasting ceasefire in Lebanon before any broader peace agreement with Trump, who has been frustrated by Tehran's refusal to accept a deal on his terms. An Israeli military official said Sunday that Hezbollah had fired around 200 projectiles at Israel and its troops over the weekend, despite Israel and Lebanon agreeing to extend a ceasefire. Lebanon's health ministry said new Israeli strikes Sunday on the country's south killed five people, including two children. Israeli attacks since the start of the war have killed more than 2,900 people in Lebanon, including 400 since the truce began on April 17, according to Lebanese authorities. Washington and Tehran agreed to a truce on April 8, but peace negotiations have stalled and sporadic attacks have continued. The Fars news agency said Washington had presented a five-point list which included a demand for Iran to keep only one nuclear site in operation and transfer its stockpile of highly enriched uranium to the United States. Washington also refused to release "even 25%" of Iran's frozen assets abroad or pay any reparations for the damage inflicted on Iran during the war, according to Fars. The Mehr news agency, meanwhile, said: "The United States, offering no tangible concessions, wants to obtain concessions that it failed to obtain during the war, which will lead to an impasse in the negotiations." Sunday saw more unrest in parts of the region.

Federal Shariat Court strikes down 2022 legislation

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Shariat Court (FSC) on Monday declared the decriminalisation of suicide attempts un-Islamic and struck down the 2022 legislation through which it had been omitted from the Pakistan Penal Code. A three-member bench comprising Chief Justice Iqbal Hameedur Rehman, Justice Syed Muhammad Anwar and Justice Amir Khan announced the reserved verdict on two separate petitions challenging the amendments introduced through the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2022. The petitions were pursued by Advocates Hammad Hassan Dar and Azam Malik. The court declared the relevant provisions of the 2022 law repugnant to the injunctions of Islam and consequently void. Through the impugned legislation, parliament had omitted Section 325 of the Pakistan Penal Code, which had criminalised the attempt to commit suicide. With the judgement, the deleted provision of the penal code stands restored. According to the short order, the FSC held that the state has the authority under Islamic injunctions to prohibit and penalise acts that endanger human life, including attempted suicide. The court observed that Islam unequivocally prohibits suicide and emphasises the sanctity and protection of human life. It further noted that removing criminal liability for attempted suicide was inconsistent with the constitutional obligation requiring all laws to conform to Islamic injunctions. The bench accepted both petitions and directed that the omission of Section 325 of the PPC through the 2022 amendment would have no legal effect following the judgement. -APP

Putin's China visit expected to further advance ties

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin will exchange views on bilateral ties, cooperation in various fields, as well as international and regional issues of mutual interest, during Putin's upcoming visit to China, a spokesperson said on Monday. Putin will pay a state visit to China from May 19 to 20 at the invitation of Xi. This will be President Putin's 25th visit to China, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said at a regular news briefing. "The two sides will take this visit as an opportunity to continue to promote the development of China-Russia relations to a higher level, which will inject greater stability and positive energy into the world," Guo said.

No work, no pay: War hits hard OFWs in the Middle East

The part-time jobs - cleaning services and offering Filipino holistic massage - are few and far between and are not enough to cover Cinderella's monthly rent of \$163 (Dh600) and daily food costs

DUBAI: "The money I raise from my part-time work is not enough, so I usually just have a meal once a day to save money," Dubai-based Filipino household helper Cinderella told Arab News. "I was working for a Syrian family here in Dubai, but they left the UAE because of the US-Iran conflict amid fears regarding their safety." "Only if I manage to raise extra money am I able to send money to my mother in the Philippines," she said, as she described her employment situation in the UAE over the past three years, adding that she said it felt "like a disaster." The conflict, now in its third month, upended the economy in the Middle East, especially those in Gulf countries that are dependent not only on Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) but also more than 200 nationalities for their workforce requirements. Expatriates make up as much as 88 percent of the population demographic in Qatar and the UAE. There are more than 2.4 million OFWs

in the Middle East, mostly in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, who work in sectors including healthcare, hospitality, services and retail. The conflict sent major shockwaves across the Gulf economies, and for millions of migrant workers this meant temporary or permanent job losses, lost wages and financial distress for them and their families back home. With business declining because of the conflict, so too did Kim's employment when the luxury hotel in Doha where she worked for three years, started shedding jobs. "The hotel was cutting employees, especially those who were in higher positions, since they were not yet needed for operations because of the situation," Kim told Arab News. "Probably, they were expecting business to be weak because of the conflict, so those in senior positions were let go. I was among about 200 staff - from France, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Arab nationalities - who received termination papers. -DNA

Multiple life sentences awarded in single trial: SC

The court further observed that paragraph 40 of the "Shah Hussain versus The State" judgment could not be treated as a binding precedent because the earlier larger bench decision in the Bashir case had not been considered in that ruling

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has ruled that multiple life sentences awarded by a sessions court in a single trial shall, as a general rule, run consecutively unless the court specifically orders them to run concurrently. The apex court further held that paragraph 40 of the judgment in the "Shah Hussain case" does not constitute a binding precedent regarding the interpretation of Section 35 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, while the five-member bench ruling in the "Bashir versus The State" case remains valid and enforceable law. A three-member bench headed by Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar, and comprising Justice Salahuddin Panhwar and Justice Ishfaq Ibrahim, issued a detailed

judgment dismissing a jail petition and criminal appeal filed by convict Qaiser Abbas in a double murder case. According to the judgment, the case pertained to FIR No. 828/2011 registered at Allama Iqbal Town police station, Lahore, in which Qaiser Abbas was accused of shooting dead Faiza Bibi and Abiha on June 23, 2011. The prosecution stated that a dispute had taken place a month earlier between the convict's sister and one of the deceased women, which led to the murders out of personal enmity. The trial court had sentenced the convict to two separate life imprisonments under Section 302(b) of the Pakistan Penal Code and directed that both sentences would run consecutively. The Lahore High Court had upheld the conviction and sentence.

During the hearing before the Supreme Court, counsel for the convict did not challenge the conviction on the merits but requested the court to order that both life sentences run concurrently. The defence argued that under Section 35 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a person cannot practically serve more than one life sentence. The Supreme Court held that the legal issue had already been settled by a five-member larger bench in the "Bashir versus The State" case, which ruled that multiple life sentences awarded in a single trial are to run consecutively unless the court expressly directs otherwise. The court further observed that paragraph 40 of the "Shah Hussain versus The State" judgment could not be treated as a binding

precedent because the earlier larger bench decision in the Bashir case had not been considered in that ruling. The judgment stated that allowing multiple murder sentences to run concurrently would create the impression that killing more than one person carries the same punishment as killing a single individual, which would be contrary to the principles of justice and law. The apex court emphasized that every human life has independent value and that each murder warrants a separate punishment. Therefore, consecutive sentences in such cases are consistent with the requirements of justice. The Supreme Court dismissed both petitions and upheld the judgments of the trial court and the Lahore High Court. -APP

Briefs

NDMA issued high alert

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Monday issued a high level heatwave alert warning that large parts of southern and central Pakistan are likely to experience dangerously high temperatures from May 19 to 26, prompting authorities to activate emergency response measures to protect vulnerable populations and reduce the risk of heat related emergencies. According to the alert, temperatures are expected to remain exceptionally high for three to five consecutive days across several districts of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan. In Punjab, the districts likely to be affected include Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalnagar, Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, Sargodha, Lodhran, Khanewal, Vehari and Lahore. Sindh is expected to face severe heat conditions in Hyderabad, Jacobabad, Khairpur, Sukkur, Larkana, Dadu, Naushahro Feroze, Kashmore, Tharparkar, Shaheed Benazirabad, Matiari, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Badin, Qambar Shahdadkot and Karachi along with adjoining areas. The alert also identified exposed regions of Balochistan, including Turbat, Sibi, Uthal, Jhal Magsi, Dera Murad Jamali, Nasirabad, Jaffarabad, Usta Muhammad, Kachhi, Lasbela and Panjgur, as vulnerable to extreme heat conditions.

Bodies of 4 Italian divers recovered

COLOMBO/ROME: Italy's Foreign Ministry said Monday rescuers have located the bodies of four Italian divers believed to be deep inside an underwater cave in a Maldivian atoll. The searches had resumed on Monday after being suspended following the death of a local military diver during a perilous mission to try to reach them. Five Italian divers are believed to have died while exploring a cave at a depth of about 50 meters (160 feet) in Vaavu Atoll on Thursday, according to Italy's Foreign Ministry. The recreational diving limit in the Maldives is 30 meters. The body of one Italian — a diving instructor — was found earlier outside the cave. Three Finnish cave divers joined efforts to try to find and recover the bodies of four Italian scuba divers who died in an accident in underwater caves, the DAN Europe divers' network said. The team arrived on Sunday, DAN Europe said in a statement, after the incident in the Vaavu Atoll, where the Italian divers had been exploring caves at a depth of 50 meters (165 feet) on Thursday. The body of one of the Italian divers was recovered on Friday, the Maldives National Defense Force (MNDP) said in a statement on Friday. — APP

Fin Minister, WB team review economic reform priorities

During the meeting, the Finance Minister appreciated the World Bank's continued engagement with Pakistan on economic reforms and institutional development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting at the Finance Division with a World Bank team led by Ms. Bolormaa Amgaabazar, Country Director for the World Bank in Pakistan. During the meeting, the Finance Minister appreciated the World Bank's continued engagement with Pakistan on economic reforms and institutional development. He acknowledged the World Bank's support across key reform areas and emphasized the importance of close coordination and technical collaboration to support implementation of the Government's economic priorities and reform agenda. The meeting reviewed progress on a range of ongoing reform initiatives and technical assistance programs being supported by the World Bank, including public financial management reforms, institutional capacity building, debt management, and private sector development. Discussions also covered implementation timelines, coordination mechanisms, and operational arrangements relating to various reform-linked initiatives and technical support programs. The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of ensuring that technical assistance programs remain focused, specialized, and aligned with clearly defined reform objectives. He underlined the Government's preference for high-quality international expertise, practical implementation support, and knowledge transfer aimed at strengthening institutional capacity within the public sector. He further noted the importance of developing sustainable in-house expertise and enhancing the Government's ability to independently manage and implement



complex reform initiatives over time. Discussions also focused on the Government's ongoing efforts to transform the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) through reforms centered around people, processes, and technology. The Finance Minister highlighted progress being made in automation, digitization, simplification of procedures, and technology-driven monitoring systems and he reiterated that the Government remained fully committed to the broader tax administration transformation agenda and institutional modernization efforts. The World Bank team shared updates regarding its ongoing technical support relating to the Medium-Term Revenue Strategy (MTRS), Tax Policy Office (TPO), and FBR transformation initiatives. Both sides exchanged views on strengthening coordination, accelerating implementation, and ensuring that reform measures remain aligned

with broader fiscal and governance objectives. The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of operationalizing reforms in a manner that supports transparency, efficiency, and improved taxpayer facilitation. The meeting also covered broader structural reform priorities aimed at promoting sustainable and export-oriented economic growth. Discussions included regulatory reforms, trade facilitation, export competitiveness, access to credit markets, and capital market development. Participants highlighted the importance of improving the business environment, reducing regulatory barriers, and strengthening financial sector depth to support private sector-led growth and investment. The Finance Minister particularly emphasized the Government's focus on deepening domestic debt and capital markets, reducing overreliance on bank financing, and

expanding market-based financing avenues. Discussions also covered ongoing work relating to debt market development, investor outreach, and measures aimed at enhancing Pakistan's investment profile and access to international financial markets. Participants further exchanged views on labor market reforms, vocational skills development, overseas employment opportunities, workforce competitiveness, and ongoing analytical work relating to right-sizing, public sector efficiency, and long-term growth and jobs strategy. The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of aligning skills development frameworks with evolving market needs, improving labor market information systems, and leveraging existing reform work and institutional analysis to ensure that future policy interventions remain focused, practical, and implementation-oriented.

US conducts follow up strikes in Nigeria

WASHINGTON: The US Africa Command said on Monday it had carried out additional airstrikes against Daesh targets in northeastern Nigeria on Sunday, in coordination with the Nigerian government, as joint operations against militant groups intensify. Nigeria's Defense Headquarters said the latest strikes were conducted in the Metele area of Borno State, following intelligence that fighters had converged there. Multiple airstrikes killed more than 20 Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) militants, according to a statement. AFRICOM said no US or Nigerian personnel were harmed in the operation. The strikes come a day after a joint US-Nigerian mission that killed Abu-Bilal Al-Minuki, described by both governments as the second in command of Islamic State globally. US President Donald Trump and Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu confirmed the development, describing it as a major setback for the militant group. Tinubu said Nigerian forces worked closely with the US military in what he called a daring joint operation that dealt a heavy blow to Daesh's leadership. Trump, who has previously criticized Nigeria over security issues, thanked the Nigerian government for its cooperation. — APP

Stock Exchange stays under pressure

KARACHI: The equity market remained under pressure on Monday as higher international crude prices, global yield pressures and inflation concerns kept investors cautious, while Pakistan's fiscal-tightening commitments under its International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme added to the negative sentiment. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index settled at 161,613.51 points, down 3,791.05 points, or 2.29%, from the previous close of 165,596.07. The index traded in an intraday high of 164,939.08, down 656.99 points, or 0.40%, and a low of 162,971.16, reflecting a fall of 3,982.56 points, or 2.40%. "The market remained under pressure amid rising international crude oil prices and higher T-bill yields in developed economies, compressing risk premiums across global risk assets, and heightened inflationary concerns as the US-Iran conflict continues to drag on," said Huzafa Riaz, Director at Mayari Securities (Pvt) Limited. "On the domestic front, investor caution also stemmed from Pakistan's commitments to the IMF regarding revenue adjustments and fiscal tightening measures," he added. Asian equities also lost ground, extending a broader global pullback as the Middle East impasse pushed oil prices higher and lifted global government yields. — APP

Solomon Islands names China critic to government

Hou was prime minister from 2017 to 2019, just before the Solomons switched ties from Taiwan to China in 2019, a move he criticized. A former reserve bank governor, Hou "is experienced in international relations and won't be intimidated," Batley said. SYDNEY: A former leader who supported ties with Taiwan and a China critic have won key roles in the new Solomon Islands government, signalling change for the South Pacific's closest backer of Beijing. Solomon Islands Prime Minister Matthew Wale was elected on Friday by lawmakers after his predecessor was ousted in a no confidence vote. Changes of leader in the strategically located archipelago, 1,600 kilometers (990 miles) northeast of Australia, are closely watched by Western diplomats. China and US-ally Australia are the largest donors and security partners to the Solomons, competing for influence. Wale appointed former prime minister Rick Hou as foreign minister, and Peter Kenilorea as the minister for National Planning and Development Coordination, dealing closely with donor countries. Kenilorea is a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, a global group of lawmakers critical of Beijing. "He will place a priority on transparency," Batley said the cabinet appointments "send a signal," but added, "it is most unlikely that Solomons is going to reverse its decision on relations with China." Hou was prime minister from 2017 to 2019, just before the Solomons switched ties from Taiwan to China in 2019, a move he criticized. A former reserve bank governor, Hou "is experienced in international relations and won't be intimidated," Batley said. Envoys from China and Australia met with Wale on Saturday. Wale told China's ambassador Cai Weiming the Solomons was committed to the One China principle and intended to work closely with China to deliver tangible benefits for people, a Solomon Islands government statement said Monday. In a meeting with Australia's High Commissioner Jeff Roach, Wale "encouraged Australia to think big and think long-term to further grow and nurture the partnership," the prime minister's office said. — Agencies

Oil prices shoot up after drone strikes

Brent crude rises 1.2% to \$110.63 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate gains 1.0% to \$106.42

DNA

LONDON: Oil led gains on Monday as fresh attacks in the Gulf intensified fears over supply disruption, pushing energy prices higher and sending ripples through global markets already under pressure from rising bond yields and geopolitical tensions. Brent crude rose 1.2% to \$110.63 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate gained 1.0% to \$106.42. Oil prices rose after a drone strike sparked a fire at a nuclear power plant in the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia said it intercepted three drones. US President Donald Trump warned Iran it must act "fast" to reach a deal. Tensions were further amplified by concerns over the Strait of Hormuz, where shipping has been heavily disrupted. Tehran is seeking to formalise tighter control over the

waterway, which typically carries around 20% of global oil trade. "The closure is draining global oil inventories fast," analysts at Capital Economics said. "Inventories could reach critical levels by end-June, setting the stage for Brent at \$130-140pb, if not higher." "If the strait is closed through year-end and oil stays around \$150pb into 2027, that would push inflation to near 10% in the UK and euro zone, send rates back to their recent peaks and lead to global recession." Rising energy costs also hit bond markets, with yields climbing sharply. US 10-year Treasury yields rose to 4.584%, up 23 basis points last week, while 30-year yields stood at 5.109% after an 18-basis-point jump. G7 finance ministers gather in Paris on Monday to discuss the Strait of Hormuz and critical raw material supply chains, as geopolitical divisions threaten to test unity. In equities, Japan's Nikkei fell 0.4% after recent record highs, while South Korea's market dropped 2.1% as semiconductor-driven gains cooled. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan lost 0.6%. Chinese stocks hovered near four-year highs ahead of data on retail sales and industrial output.

Military jet crew members safely ejected

DNA

WASHINGTON: Four crew members involved in a mid-air collision of military jets at an air show ejected safely on Sunday outside Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho, the US Navy said. Two E/A-18G Growler jets collided in mid-air two miles from the base during the two-day Gunfighter Skies Air Show, said Commander Amelia Umayam, a spokesperson for Naval Air Forces, US Pacific Fleet. The two jets with four air crew collided "while per-

forming an aerial demonstration" at around 12:10pm MDT as part of the air show, Umayam added, noting that all four crew members ejected safely. "The incident is under investigation. More information will be released as it becomes available," Umayam said. The air show's official site lists the US Navy's E/A-18G "Vikings" Growler Demo Team as one of the scheduled performers. The jets involved in the collision were assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron 129 from Whidbey Island, Washington, Umayam said. A portion of State Highway 167, where the aircraft crashed, will remain closed for several days while the investigation continues, according to the 366th Fighter Wing, which is based at Mountain Home. Sunday marked the first Gunfighter Skies Air Show in eight years. A hang glider pilot died in a crash during the last show in 2018. The Mountain Home Fire Department, Mountain Home Police Department and Elmore County emergency management coordinator did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

PM Shebaz stresses result-oriented use of public funds

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday, emphasized that public money should be invested in such development projects which ensured tangible results. The prime minister chaired a meeting to review the ongoing year's development budget and proposed projects under the upcoming Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for the next fiscal year, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During the meeting, the prime minister said that ministries demonstrating better performance would be given priority in the allocation of funds for development projects. He said that water reservoirs and hydropower projects were among the government's top priorities in the development spending and stressed that water reservoirs enhancement projects would be accorded high priority. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, along with federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahmad

Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Hanif Abbasi, Sardar Awais Leghari, Mian Mohammad Moeen Watto, Abdul Aleem Khan, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar Khan, and other senior officials. The prime minister also appreciated Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb for the successful launch of Panda Bonds and their positive reception in the market. During the briefing, the prime minister praised the performance of the ministries of railways, information technology and power. He also directed authorities to encourage public-private partnerships in the development projects. The meeting was informed about the progress made on the current PSDP and was briefed on proposed development schemes and required funding for the next fiscal year. The relevant officials also presented updates on major national water storage and hydropower projects, including Dasu Dam, Diamer-Bhasha Dam and Mohmand Dam.

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