



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

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## Naqvi meets Iranian President

# Breakthrough likely in US, Iran standoff

Following the Wednesday meeting, another round of talks between US and Iranian representatives is reportedly likely to take place in Islamabad after the Eid holidays

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a significant diplomatic development, Pakistan appears to have brokered a potential breakthrough in the long-standing stalemate between the United States and Iran. According to high-level sources, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held a crucial meeting with Iranian leadership on Wednesday, including a meeting with the Iranian President, raising hopes for a de-escalation in regional tensions. Sources close to the matter reveal that an agreement is currently being finalized between the relevant parties. The talks, facilitated by Pakistani officials, are said to have focused on confidence-building measures and a possible roadmap to reduce hostilities that have threatened stability in the Middle East and beyond. "The discussions were positive and forward-looking," a source familiar with the negotiations told this correspondent. "Both sides have shown flexibility, and the outlines of an understanding are taking shape." Following the Wednesday meeting, another round of talks between US and Iranian representatives is reportedly like-

ly to take place in Islamabad after the Eid holidays. The choice of Pakistan's capital as a potential venue underscores the growing trust in Islamabad's mediatory role. In a further sign of momentum, a high-level Pakistani visit to Iran is scheduled for Thursday. Officials believe this visit could pave the way for formalizing the understanding, with speculation that a formal announcement—or "annulment" (likely referring to the termination of certain sanctions or hostile measures)—may be made soon thereafter. While no official confirmation has come from the White House or the Iranian Foreign Ministry, diplomatic circles in Islamabad are optimistic. If successful, the breakthrough would mark a major foreign policy achievement for Pakistan, positioning it as a key peace broker in one of the world's most volatile regions. Analysts caution that details remain fluid, but all signs point toward a rare diplomatic opening. The coming days, particularly after Eid, are expected to be critical in determining whether this initiative translates into a lasting agreement. Pakistan side is hopeful that the stakeholders will be able to reach an agreement thus relieving the entire world of pain and agony.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Jonathan Powell, the UK's National Security Adviser, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House. — DNA

**Shehbaz meets UK Jonathan Powell of UK**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Jonathan Powell, the UK's National Security Adviser, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House. Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Sen. Mohammad Ishaq Dar, SAPM Tariq Fatemi, Foreign Secretary Amb. Anna Baloch and Secretary National Security Division Mr. Sajid Baloch were also present. During the meeting, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's firm commitment and resolve to maintain robust and forward-looking engagement with the United Kingdom, a longstanding strategic partner. While conveying his best wishes for Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, the Prime Minister recalled

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**New UAE oil pipeline '50 per cent complete'**

DNA

DUBAI: The UAE's new crude pipeline bypassing the Strait of Hormuz is about 50 per cent complete, the head of ADNOC said on Wednesday, adding that global oil flows may take at least four months to recover to 80 per cent of pre-conflict levels after the Iran war ends. Tehran has largely kept the waterway critical for global oil and gas supplies shut to all ships other than its own since US-Israeli strikes on February 28, sending energy prices and inflation surging and fanning fears of an economic downturn.

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**PTI, PPP on same page**

**Centre assures KP of restoring gas supply to CNG stations**

Governor Kundi describes it as positive step towards addressing KP's energy concerns

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments on Wednesday successfully concluded negotiations over the closure of CNG stations, with officials confirming an agreement on gas supply arrangements for the province. The breakthrough came two days after Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Chief Minister Sohail Afridi displayed rare political unity by criticising the federal government over the suspension of gas supply and demanding immediate restoration of the CNG sector. Confirming the development, KP Governor Kundi has welcomed the restoration of gas supply to the province, describing it as a positive step towards addressing KP's energy concerns. In a post on X, the governor expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for constituting a committee and taking direct interest in the matter, terming it an important issue for the province. He further said the development reflected the strength of unified advocacy, commending

both the provincial government and opposition for standing together in defence of the rights of the people. KP CM Adviser on Finance and Inter-Provincial Coordination Muzzammil Aslam said the federal government approved the restoration of 35 mcmd gas supply to the province. He added that the issue was resolved due to the chief minister's continuous engagement with federal authorities. In a post on X, Aslam also acknowledged Governor Kundi and Opposition Leader Dr Ibadullah for "joining the chief minister on this sensitive issue". The sources within the KP government told Geo News that CNG stations across the province would remain open from 6am until 6pm following the restoration of supply. They added that the decision to restore gas supply to the province was taken during a high-level meeting attended by senior federal and provincial officials. According to sources, the meeting was attended by Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik, Rana Sanaulah, Governor Kundi and Dr Ibad, KP CM's finance adviser, KP Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, and

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### Briefs

**France summons Israeli ambassador**

DNA

PARIS: French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot on Wednesday said he had summoned the Israeli ambassador in Paris in response to a video released by Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir in which he was seen taunting detained Gaza flotilla activists. "Mr. Ben Gvir's actions towards the passengers of the Global Sumud Flotilla, denounced by his own colleagues in the Israeli government, are unacceptable," Barrot said in a post on X. Barrot said French citizens must be treated with respect and freed as soon as possible, though he added that he opposed the flotilla's approach. Italy's government also said that Israel's treatment of flotilla activists trying to take aid to Gaza was unacceptable and that it would summon the Israeli ambassador for an explanation.

**WHO says Ebola risk high regionally**

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday said the risk of the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) deadly Ebola outbreak was currently high at the national and regional levels but low worldwide. WHO experts said that while investigations into its origins were ongoing, given the scale of the situation in the eastern DRC, the outbreak probably began a couple of months ago. But the UN health agency's emergency committee said it did not currently meet the pandemic emergency threshold. "WHO assesses the risk of the epidemic as high at the national and regional levels, and low at the global level," said the organisation's chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

## UN chief wants end to hostilities

According to the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, all parties involved in the conflicts must immediately halt violations of existing ceasefires and return to diplomatic engagement under international frameworks

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations has reiterated the urgent need to end all ceasefire violations and push for a durable political settlement to the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, warning that continued hostilities risk further regional destabilisation. According to the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, all parties involved in the conflicts must immediately halt violations of existing ceasefires and return to diplomatic engagement under international frameworks. He stressed that the situation in the Middle East cannot be resolved through military escalation, adding that only a comprehensive political solution can ensure long-term peace and stability in the region. The United Nations, through its peace and security mechanisms under the United Nations, continues to call on regional and global stakeholders to exercise maximum restraint and avoid actions that could widen the conflict. The UN chief's remarks come amid heightened tensions in several parts of the Middle East,

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**War can go beyond Middle East, warns Iran**

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned on Wednesday that the Middle East war will extend beyond the region if the United States and Israel resume attacks on the Islamic republic. "If the aggression against Iran is repeated, the promised regional war will this time spread far beyond the region, and our devastating blows will crush you," the Guards said in a statement on their website Sepah News. The warning comes after US President Donald Trump said Washington could strike Iran again if no deal on a lasting settlement is reached in the coming days. The two sides have escalated their threats while swapping proposals to end the war, which broke

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## Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping against any further ME escalation

Xi and Putin unite in criticism of US on nuclear, security issues

DNA

BEIJING: President Xi Jinping hailed China and Russia's "unyielding" ties in talks with Vladimir Putin on Wednesday, as the pair met to underscore their alliance days after Donald Trump's visit to the Asian superpower economy. After the US president was received with pomp last week but left without major breakthroughs, including on help with reopening the Strait of Hormuz, Putin's visit will be scrutinised for tangible takeaways. Putin is, however, weakened by years of Russia's war on Ukraine, as sanctions by Western powers put the squeeze on energy revenues and increased Moscow's dependence on China, the main buyer of Russian oil. The US war on Iran has however hampered crude and gas flows, giving an opportunity to Putin to offer Russian energy sources as an alternative. Analysts believe that Putin could use the visit to push for progress on the major "Power of Siberia 2" natural gas pipeline from Russia to China through Mongolia — a land alternative to crude imported by sea from the Middle East. Opening talks in Beijing's opulent Great Hall of the People, Putin and Xi were quick to laud their countries' special ties as they extended their treaty of "friendly cooperation". Beijing and Moscow have

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**'China training Russian troops'**

DNA

BERLIN: European intelligence agencies believe the Chinese military has trained hundreds of Russian soldiers for fighting in Ukraine, according to Germany's Die Welt newspaper which cited secret documents it had seen. The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) reportedly hosted covert training for several hundred Russian soldiers late last year at six military bases in China, the newspaper reported on Wednesday, citing the classified documents. The training, according to the report, focused primarily on the deployment of drones and electronic countermeasures, with many of the Russians sent to fight in Ukraine soon after, including with Russia's elite "Rubicon" frontline drone unit. AFP could not independently verify the newspaper report. China has claimed neutrality in the ongoing Russian invasion of

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# 巴中友谊 75周年



# 75 YEARS OF PAKISTAN-CHINA FRIENDSHIP

A FRIENDSHIP THAT TURNED DREAMS INTO REALITY



**ASIF ALI ZARDARI**  
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

On behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan, I extend warm felicitations to the leadership and people of China, especially President Xi Jinping, on the historic occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China.

Over the past seventy-five years, Pakistan-China relations have stood as a remarkable example of enduring friendship, mutual trust, strategic cooperation and steadfast support for each other's core interests.

The Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership has continued to grow from strength to strength, serving as an anchor for peace, stability and development in the region. The people of Pakistan take immense pride in this exemplary friendship, nurtured and strengthened by successive generations of leaders and peoples of our two countries.

Under the visionary leadership of President Xi Jinping, China has achieved extraordinary progress in modernisation, innovation, poverty alleviation and national rejuvenation.

Pakistan deeply appreciates China's far-reaching global initiatives, including the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and Global Governance Initiative, which reflect China's constructive and forward-looking contribution toward promoting peace, sustainable development, mutual respect among civilizations and a more cooperative and harmonious international environment.

These important initiatives resonate strongly with Pakistan's own aspirations for regional harmony, shared prosperity and multilateral cooperation.

Pakistan highly values President Xi Jinping's deep personal commitment to strengthening Pakistan-China relations and advancing the shared vision of building an even closer Pakistan-China Community of Shared Future in the New Era.

Pakistan deeply appreciates China's steadfast support for Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and socio-economic development.

Pakistan remains firmly committed to the One-China principle and will continue to support China on issues concerning its core interests.

Pakistan deeply appreciates the vision and the leadership that the Peoples' Republic of China has provided to Global South, especially the positive role it has played in ending the current conflict in West Asia.

I also wish to convey my profound appreciation for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to me and my delegation during my recent visits to China.

The sincerity, warmth and generosity extended by the Chinese leadership reflected the unique character of our Iron Brotherhood and left a lasting impression on all members of the delegation.

The visits further reinforced our shared resolve to accelerate high-quality development under CPEC 2.0, expand economic and investment cooperation and explore promising new avenues of collaboration in emerging sectors, including technology, agriculture, green energy, innovation, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

As our two countries commemorate this historic milestone, we reaffirm our commitment to further elevating Pakistan-China friendship particularly through the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

I am confident that the friendship between Pakistan and China will continue to flourish and attain even greater heights in the years ahead.

I also extend my best wishes for the continued progress, prosperity and well-being of the friendly people of China.



**MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF**  
Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Today, we mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China.

On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, as well as on my own behalf, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to the peoples of Pakistan and China, on the historic occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China.

As we commemorate this historic milestone, in a befitting manner, it would enable our peoples, particularly the younger generations, to better appreciate the depth, breadth, vitality, and future-oriented character of Pakistan-China relations.

The people of Pakistan hold the people of China in the highest esteem and affection. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations on May 21, 1951, the friendship between Pakistan and China has steadily evolved into an All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. Built on mutual trust, sovereign equality, and shared aspirations for peace and development, our bilateral relations have continued to grow in strength, substance, and strategic significance, amidst changing regional and global circumstances.

Pakistan highly values the visionary leadership of President Xi Jinping and appreciates China's remarkable achievements in economic development, technological advancement, poverty alleviation, and global connectivity. Under President Xi's visionary leadership, China has achieved remarkable progress in modernization, innovation, poverty alleviation, and national rejuvenation. China's progress and transformation continue to inspire the developing world and contribute significantly to global peace and prosperity.

The commitment of the Chinese leadership to strengthen Pakistan-China relations and advance the shared vision of building a closer "Pakistan-China Community of Shared Future in the New Era" is most commendable. Pakistan deeply appreciates China's cooperation with Pakistan in multifaceted fields. Pakistan remains firmly committed to the One-China principle and will continue to support China on issues concerning its core interests.

China's robust support for Pakistan's socio-economic development and national priorities has played a phenomenal role. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, has made tremendous contribution towards Pakistan's infrastructure development, energy security, industrial cooperation, and regional connectivity.

Pakistan remains firmly committed to the high-quality development of CPEC as it enters its next phase, with greater emphasis on industrialization, agriculture, information technology, science and technology, green development, and enhanced people-centered cooperation.

It is encouraging to witness Pakistan-China cooperation, expanding into new frontiers including digital economy, innovation, space cooperation, education, and cultural exchanges.

From the Karakoram Highway to cooperation in outer space, Pakistan-China friendship continues to demonstrate how enduring strategic trust can be translated into meaningful progress and shared prosperity for our peoples.

The 75th anniversary of the establishment of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations is not only about remembering the past; it is about shaping the future. At a time of increasing global uncertainty and transformation, Pakistan and China remain committed to multilateralism, peaceful coexistence, and inclusive development. Our All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership continues to serve as a positive force for regional stability and international cooperation.

May the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China continue to grow stronger with every generation!

Pakistan-China Friendship Zindabad!



**SENATOR MUHAMMAD ISHAQ DAR**  
Deputy Prime Minister/ Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

On the joyous occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the People's Republic of China, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to the peoples of both Pakistan and China.

Seventy-five years ago, our two nations embarked on a journey rooted in mutual respect and shared aspirations. Today, that journey has evolved into a unique All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. Our relationship stands as a singular example in international diplomacy — defined not by transactional convenience, but by ironclad trust and brotherhood.

As we reflect on this milestone, we celebrate a history in which Pakistan and China have consistently stood by each other through various challenges, safeguarding each other's core interests with unwavering solidarity.

I also wish to express my deep personal appreciation for the visionary leadership of China and Pakistan in strengthening the strong bond of Pakistan-China Friendship.

The tireless efforts of the leadership in navigating our bilateral relations and enhancing strategic communication have been invaluable. For the past 75 years, the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership has withstood the test of time and developed from strength to strength in multifaceted fields.

The Pakistan-China relationship is deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of the peoples of the two countries. Our leadership, businessmen, entrepreneurs, professionals, and students have all played a vital role and acted as bridges in cementing our ties over the last 75 years. The relationship has enjoyed continuity across generations and governments.

At this historic juncture, I would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of Chinese companies, engineers, workers, and professionals who continue to work with dedication in Pakistan. We acknowledge and appreciate their dedicated efforts in the development of Pakistan, especially under CPEC.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) remains the flagship of our economic cooperation and a cornerstone of the Belt and Road Initiative. Over the past decade, it has transformed Pakistan's infrastructure and energy landscape. As we move ahead, I am particularly encouraged by our shared focus on the second phase of CPEC, which prioritizes industrialization, agricultural modernization, and socio-economic development, thereby contributing to continued improvements in the lives of our people and fostering a future of shared prosperity.

In a world facing complex geopolitical challenges, the strategic convergence between Pakistan and China provides much-needed stability. Our collaboration in multilateral forums, based on our shared commitment to justice, fairness, multilateralism, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, remains a cornerstone of our bilateral relationship.

Together, we continue to advocate and promote the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind. The enduring friendship between Pakistan and China has long served — and will continue to serve — as an anchor of peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and beyond.

As we look toward the future, I am confident that the Pakistan-China "Iron-Clad Brotherhood" will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Let us continue to work together, carry forward this brotherly friendship, and forge an even closer China-Pakistan relationship for a peaceful, progressive, and prosperous world.

Pakistan Zindabad! China Zindabad!

Long Live Pakistan-China Friendship!



**PROF. AHSAN IQBAL**  
Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

It is with immense pride that I offer my warmest felicitations on the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, a friendship that has long transcended the formalities of statecraft to become something far rarer and more enduring: an Iron Brotherhood, forged in shared purpose and strengthened with every passing decade.

I have had the distinct honour of standing at the heart of this partnership's most transformative chapter, as Minister in charge of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and the driving force behind its continued evolution into CPEC 2.0. What began as a bold vision has since become a lived reality across our nation: power restored to millions of homes and industries, modern road networks connecting regions that geography had long kept apart, and Gwadar rising as a maritime hub whose strategic significance now resonates far beyond our coastline.

These achievements are not merely milestones on a map. They are the enduring expression of what two nations can accomplish when their friendship is rooted in trust, genuine reciprocity and an unshakeable belief in each other's potential.

As we step forward together, the convergence of CPEC 2.0 and Pakistan's national development vision, URAAN Pakistan, marks a deeper and more purposeful alignment between our two countries. URAAN's five pillars of Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment and Climate Change, Energy and Infrastructure, and Equity, Ethics and Empowerment find their natural counterpart in CPEC 2.0's five corridors of Growth, Livelihood, Innovation, Green Development and Openness.

These are not parallel frameworks merely running alongside each other. They are two expressions of the same conviction: that lasting prosperity is built people first, and that no nation builds it better than when it builds alongside a true and committed partner. Seventy-five years is a remarkable distance to have travelled together, and yet the truest measure of this friendship lies not in how far we have come, but in how resolutely and ambitiously we choose to keep moving forward.

The foundations are strong, the vision is shared, and the possibilities that lie ahead in trade, technology, knowledge, green development and human connection far exceed anything we have yet attempted together.

This anniversary is not a destination to rest upon. It is a renewed call to deepen our ties, diversify our collaboration and keep building, with the same conviction that brought us this far, because the most meaningful chapters of this friendship are still ahead of us.



**阿西夫·阿里·扎尔达里**  
巴基斯坦伊斯兰共和国总统

值此巴基斯坦与中华人民共和国建交75周年的历史性时刻，我谨代表巴基斯坦政府和人民，向中国领导人和中国人民，特别是向习近平主席，致以最热烈的祝贺。

七十五年来，巴中关系历久弥坚，堪称持久友谊、互信、战略合作以及坚定支持彼此核心利益的杰出典范。在不断演变的地区和国际形势下，我们两国始终团结一致，并肩前行。

巴中全天候战略合作伙伴关系持续发展壮大，已成为维护地区和平、稳定与发展的基石。巴基斯坦人民对这段由我们两国历代领导人和人民共同培育、巩固的友谊深感自豪。

在习近平主席的远见卓识领导下，中国在现代化、科技创新、脱贫攻坚和民族复兴等方面取得了非凡成就。巴基斯坦高度评价中国提出的全球发展倡议、全球安全倡议、全球文明倡议及全球治理倡议等一系列具有深远影响的全球性倡议。这些倡议体现了中国为促进和平、可持续发展、文明间相互尊重以及构建更加合作、更加和谐的国际环境所作出的建设性、前瞻性贡献。这些重要倡议与巴基斯坦自身对地区和平、共享繁荣和多边合作的愿望高度契合。

巴基斯坦高度重视习近平主席对加强巴中关系、推动构建新时代更加紧密的巴中命运共同体所展现的深厚个人承诺和远见。巴基斯坦衷心感谢中国对巴基斯坦主权、领土完整及经济社会发展的大力支持。巴基斯坦始终坚定奉行一个中国原则，并将继续在涉及中国核心利益的问题上支持中国。

我谨对近期访华期间，中方给予我和我的代表团热情、友好且隆重的接待表示深切感谢。中国领导人所展现的真诚、热情与慷慨，充分体现了我们两国“铁杆兄弟”关系的独特内涵，给代表团全体成员留下了深刻印象。这些访问进一步强化了我们共同推动中巴经济走廊第二阶段高质量发展、扩大经济与合作，以及在科技、农业、绿色能源、创新、旅游和人文交流等新领域探索富有前景的合作新路径的坚定决心。

在我们两国共同纪念这一历史性里程碑之际，我们重申致力于进一步提升巴中友谊，特别是通过中巴经济走廊的下一阶段建设。

我相信，巴中友谊将在未来岁月中继续蓬勃发展，达到新的高度。

我同时向友好的中国人民致以最美好的祝愿，祝愿他们不断进步、繁荣幸福。



**穆罕默德·夏巴兹·谢里夫**  
巴基斯坦伊斯兰共和国总理

今天，我们共同庆祝巴基斯坦与中国建交外交关系75周年。

值此巴中建交75周年的历史性时刻，我谨代表巴基斯坦政府以及我个人的名义，向巴基斯坦和中国人民致以最诚挚的祝贺。

当我们以恰当的方式纪念这一历史性里程碑时，这将使我们的人民，特别是年轻一代，能够更深刻地理解巴中关系的深度、广度、活力及其面向未来的鲜明特质。

巴基斯坦人民对中国人民怀有最崇高的敬意和最深厚的情谊。自1951年5月21日两国建立外交关系以来，巴中友谊已稳步发展为全天候战略合作伙伴关系。建立在互信、主权平等以及对和平与发展的共同愿望基础上，我们的双边关系在不断变化的地区和全球形势下，持续增强其力量、内涵与战略意义。

巴基斯坦高度评价习近平主席富有远见的领导，并赞赏中国在经济、科技、脱贫攻坚和全球互联互通方面取得的卓越成就。在习近平主席的远见卓识领导下，中国在现代化、创新、脱贫攻坚、民族复兴以及民生福祉等方面取得了举世瞩目的进展。中国的进步与转型持续激励着发展中国，并为全球和平与繁荣作出了重要贡献。

中国领导人致力于加强巴中关系、推动构建更加紧密的新时代巴中命运共同体这一共同愿景，其坚定承诺令人倍感鼓舞。

巴基斯坦高度评价中国在各个领域与巴基斯坦开展的广泛合作。巴基斯坦始终坚定奉行一个中国原则，并将继续在涉及中国核心利益的问题上支持中国。

中国对巴基斯坦社会经济发展和国家优先事项的有力支持发挥了非凡作用。中巴经济走廊作为“一带一路”倡议的旗舰项目，为巴基斯坦的基础设施建设、能源安全、产业合作和区域互联互通作出了巨大贡献。随着中巴经济走廊进入下一阶段，巴基斯坦依然坚定致力于其高质量发展，更加注重工业化、农业、信息技术、科技、绿色发展以及以人民为中心的深化合作。

令人鼓舞的是，巴中合作正不断拓展至数字经济、创新、航天合作、教育和文化交流等新的前沿领域。从喀喇昆仑公路建设到航天领域合作，巴中友谊持续证明：持久的战略互信如何能够转化为两国人民实实在在的进步与共享的繁荣。

巴中建交75周年，不仅是回顾过去，更是塑造未来。在全球局势日益不确定和深刻变革的时代，巴基斯坦和中国依然坚定致力于多边主义、和平共处和包容性发展。我们的全天候战略合作伙伴关系持续成为维护地区稳定和促进国际合作的积极力量。

愿巴中之间的持久友谊世代相传，愈加深厚！

巴中友谊万岁！



**穆罕默德·伊沙克·达尔**  
巴基斯坦伊斯兰共和国副总理兼外交部长

值此巴基斯坦伊斯兰共和国与中华人民共和国建交75周年的喜庆时刻，我谨向巴基斯坦和中国人民致以最诚挚的祝贺。

七十五年前，我们两国开启了一段植根于相互尊重与共同愿望的征程。今天，这段征程已发展成为一种独一无二的全天候战略合作伙伴关系。我们的双边关系堪称国际外交史上的独特典范——其特质并非基于功利化的利益算计，而是建立在牢不可破的信任与兄弟情谊之上。

在回顾这一里程碑之际，我们共同庆祝这段历史：巴基斯坦与中国始终在种种挑战中并肩同行，以坚定不移的团结相互捍卫彼此的核心利益。

我同时要对巴基斯坦和中国两国富有远见的领导人在巩固巴中友谊强大纽带方面所作出的努力，表示深切的个人赞赏。

两国领导人在引领双边关系、加强战略沟通方面所作出的不懈努力，弥足珍贵。过去七十五年来，巴中全天候战略合作伙伴关系历经时间考验，在多领域持续发展壮大。

巴中关系深深植根于两国人民的心中。我们的领导人、商界人士、企业家、专业人士以及学生，都在过去七十五年间为巩固两国关系发挥了重要作用，成为连接彼此的桥梁。这种关系跨越世代与政府更迭，始终保持延续性。

在此历史性时刻，我要感谢那些在巴基斯坦辛勤工作的中国企业、工程师、工人及专业人士所作出的宝贵贡献。我们肯定并赞赏他们为巴基斯坦发展，特别是在中巴经济走廊框架下所倾注的奉献与努力。中巴经济走廊始终是我们经济合作的旗舰项目，也是“一带一路”倡议的重要基石。过去十余年间，它已深刻改变了巴基斯坦的基础设施建设和能源格局。展望未来，尤其令我鼓舞的是，我们共同聚焦于中巴经济走廊第二阶段建设，该阶段以工业化、农业现代化和社会经济发展为重点，将持续改善我们人民的生活水平，并培育一个共享繁荣的未来。

在当今世界面临复杂地缘政治挑战的背景下，巴基斯坦与中国之间的战略契合提供了宝贵的稳定性。我们在多边论坛中的协作，植根于对公正、公平、多边主义以及尊重主权与领土完整的共同承诺，始终是我们双边关系的基石。我们两国继续共同倡导并推动构建人类命运共同体的伟大愿景。巴中之间的持久友谊，始终是并将继续成为维护地区乃至世界和平、稳定与繁荣的压舱石。

展望未来，我坚信巴中“铁杆兄弟情谊”将不断巩固壮大。

让我们继续携手努力，传承并弘扬这份兄弟般的友谊，为建设一个和平、进步、繁荣的世界，锻造更加紧密的巴中关系。

巴基斯坦万岁！中国万岁！

巴中友谊万岁！



**阿赫桑·伊克巴尔**  
巴基斯坦伊斯兰共和国联邦规划、发展与特别倡议部长

值此巴基斯坦与中国建交75周年之际，我怀着无比自豪的心情，致以最热烈的祝贺。巴中友谊早已超越国家间交往的礼节形式，升华为一种更为珍贵、更为持久的关系——这就是“铁杆兄弟情谊”。它建立在共同目标之上，并随着每一个十年的发展而日益巩固。我曾有幸作为中巴经济走廊的主管部长，并成为推动其持续发展为“中巴经济走廊2.0”的中坚力量，站在这一伙伴关系最具变革意义的篇章的中心。曾经宏伟的愿景，如今已在我国成为鲜活现实：

数百万家庭和工业恢复了电力供应，现代化的公路网络将长期被地理隔绝的地区连接起来，瓜达尔崛起为一个其战略意义早已超越我们海岸线的海事枢纽。这些成就不仅仅是地图上的里程碑。它们生动地诠释了：当两个国家的友谊植根于信任、真正的互利互惠以及对彼此潜力坚定不移的信念时，能够取得怎样的成就。

在我们携手前行的过程中，中巴经济走廊2.0与巴基斯坦国家发展愿景“巴基斯坦崛起”的相互契合，标志着我们两国之间更加深入、更具目标性的协同。“巴基斯坦崛起”的五大支柱（出口、数字、环境、能源和公平赋权），与中巴经济走廊2.0的五大走廊（增长走廊、民生走廊、创新走廊、绿色走廊和开放走廊）形成天然契合。这并非两套并行不悖的框架。它们是同一信念的两种表达：持久的繁荣必须以人民为中心，任何国家只有在与真正、坚定的伙伴携手并肩时，才能建设得更好。

七十五年，是一段走过的非凡历程。然而，衡量这段友谊的真正标准，不在于我们已经走了多远，而在于我们以多么坚定和雄心壮志的姿态，选择继续向前迈进。我们的基础坚实，愿景共通，未来在贸易、科技、知识、绿色发展以及人文交流等方面的广阔可能性，远远超过我们迄今为止共同尝试过的任何事情。这个周年纪念并非驻足歇脚的终点。它是一声新的号角，号召我们深化彼此纽带、拓展合作领域，并怀着引领我们走到今天的同样信念，继续建设下去——因为这段友谊最富意义的篇章，仍在等待我们去书写。



## 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 Forced 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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Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



### Enquiry

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PIA Flight Info.....114
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Railway Inquiry.....117
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WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
CAA.....9281022



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CMH.....5611111
MH.....561116
Dant Hospital...9270907-11
CHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



### Departments

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Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3



### Water Tank

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Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343
Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Pak offshore frontier reopens after nearly two decades

The Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment to facilitate exploration activities by maintaining a stable, transparent, and investor-friendly environment that supports the sustainable development of Pakistan's indigenous energy resources

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik today witnessed the signing ceremony of Production Sharing Agreements (PSAs) and Exploration Licences (ELs) for offshore exploration blocks awarded under the Offshore Bid Round 2025, marking the formal reopening of Pakistan's offshore frontier after nearly two decades. The awarded blocks are located in the Indus and Makran offshore basins adjoining the territorial waters of Sindh and Balochistan. The Offshore Bid Round 2025 attracted bids covering approximately 54,600 square kilometres of Pakistan's offshore area, resulting in the award of 23 offshore blocks. Two offshore blocks awarded under the same bid round, Offshore Deep-C and Offshore Deep-F, had earlier been executed on December 2, 2025, with Mari Energies Limited, Turkish Petroleum Overseas Company (TPOC), and Fatima Petroleum Company Limited during a ceremony held at the Prime Minister's Office. With the signing of the remaining 21 PSAs today, the contractual framework for the entire Offshore Bid Round 2025 portfolio now stands fully completed. Speaking at the ceremony, the Federal Minister for Petroleum termed the signing a defining milestone in the Government's efforts to revitalise offshore exploration, attract both foreign and domestic investment, and reduce reliance on imported energy. He noted that the agreements reflect strong investor confidence in Pakistan's offshore upstream potential, a frontier spanning 282,623 square kilometres, where only 18 exploratory wells have been drilled since independence. The Minister further highlighted that the successful completion of the offshore bid round reflects the Government's commitment to positioning Pakistan as a credible and competitive offshore destination through a transparent and investor-friendly regulatory framework. This includes the promulgation of the Offshore Petroleum Rules and the introduction of a Model Production Sharing Agreement incorporated within the bid package to enhance transparency, competitiveness,



and investor confidence. Mari Energies Limited emerged as the most active participant in the 23 offshore blocks, including 18 blocks as Operator and 05 blocks as a joint venture partner with other exploration and production companies. Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGD-CL) and Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) have each been awarded eight exploration blocks each, including 02 blocks as Operator. Prime Global Energies Limited has also been awarded one block as Operator. United Energy Pakistan Limited (UEP) and Orient Petroleum Incorporation (OPI), alongside other joint venture partners, also participated in the signing ceremony. Collectively, the awarded blocks represent an investment of approximately USD 82

million during Phase-I of the initial three-year licence period. Total investment is projected to increase to approximately USD 1 billion if exploration activities progress to Phase-II drilling operations. Phase-I activities will involve extensive geological and geophysical studies, including seismic data acquisition, processing, and interpretation, aimed at better defining the hydrocarbon potential of Pakistan's offshore basins. Subject to encouraging results, Phase-II will involve the drilling of exploratory wells in prospective offshore areas. In addition, the awardees have undertaken significant commitments towards social welfare and capacity-building initiatives in the coastal regions of Sindh and Balochistan. In the event of commercial hydrocarbon discoveries, substantial follow-on

investments amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars are anticipated for appraisal, field development, and production activities. These developments are expected to generate employment opportunities, facilitate technology transfer, and contribute meaningfully towards reducing Pakistan's energy import bill. The Petroleum Division intends to engage leading international oil companies in the next phase of offshore exploration, with several global energy firms already evaluating available offshore data. The Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment to facilitate exploration activities by maintaining a stable, transparent, and investor-friendly environment that supports the sustainable development of Pakistan's indigenous energy resources.

## G-11 market termed a turning point

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The leadership of the Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) has formally thanked the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI), the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), and JazzCash for their role in establishing Islamabad's first dedicated marketplace for women entrepreneurs, saying the initiative has opened a long-overdue commercial door for women across Islamabad Rawalpindi and other nearby cities. Samina Fazil, Founder President of IWCCI, said the Women Enterprise Market in G-11 would not have become a reality without the institutional commitment shown by Chairman CDA Lt. (Retd) Sohail Ashraf and Dr. Anam Fatima, Director MCI, which allocated dedicated commercial space at a time when women entrepreneurs in the twin cities had no formal marketplace of their own. She said the support extended by these bodies reflected a meaningful shift in how public institutions were beginning to engage with women's economic participation. Naima Ansari, former Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), said the G-11 market gave women a concrete platform to move from informal vending and home-based work into structured, visible commercial activity. She said institutions such as SBP and JazzCash had reinforced the initiative by embedding financial inclusion directly into the market's design through its fully cashless operating model. Both leaders noted that the backdrop against which this market was launched made institutional backing all the more significant. With only 1 percent of Pakistani women currently engaged in entrepreneurship against 21 percent of men.

## Senator Sarmad Ali grills CDA chairman in Senate committee meeting

Criticizing the civic authority's role in the federal capital, he alleged that the CDA was "only there to demolish poor people's houses" instead of addressing the city's growing infrastructure and governance challenges

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee turned tense as Sarmad Ali strongly criticized the performance of the Capital Development Authority and grilled its chairman over alleged administrative failures and non-compliance with parliamentary oversight. During the committee session, Senator Sarmad Ali remarked that the CDA chairman "considers himself as the deputy prime minister" and accused him of repeatedly avoiding committee meetings despite being summoned on important public issues. The senator also raised serious concerns over the operation of the Islamabad Metro Bus service, claiming it was being run "without any law or proper legal framework." Criticizing the civic authority's role in the federal capital, he alleged that the CDA was "only there to demolish poor people's houses" instead of addressing the city's growing infrastructure and governance challenges. Other members of the committee also joined the criticism and questioned the CDA chairman over various administrative matters, governance issues, and alleged irregularities linked to the authority's functioning. The committee members stressed the need for greater accountability, transparency, and adherence to legal procedures in managing Islamabad's civic affairs and public transport system.



## Chinese irrigation tech fix Pak's struggling agriculture

ISLAMABAD: "We organized an online-offline training workshop on water-saving irrigation technology in Islamabad last year. Impressively, the final tally shows that online-only participants alone exceeded 960," Xinjiang Tianye (Group) Co., Ltd. told China Economic Net at the recently concluded 2026 World Irrigation Technology Conference, according to China Economic Net. This overwhelming turnout comes as no surprise, given that for years, China's smart and affordable irrigation technologies have been viewed as one of the most viable lifelines for Pakistan's agricultural sector. Yet despite long-running trials, partnerships, and verified outcomes in Pakistan, most of these solutions remain confined to small demonstration plots, failing to reach farmers who need them most. China's modern water-saving irrigation technologies have taken root in Pakistan for nearly 20 years. For instance, the aforementioned workshop has run for 16

editions since 2004. That same year, Tianye Group, one of China's first enterprises to introduce these technologies to Pakistan, launched drip irrigation demonstration programs there. It has been conducting trials in Punjab and Sindh, focusing on maize, cotton, and wheat. These trials have delivered tangible gains. Drip irrigation systems save at least 50% of water compared with traditional flood irrigation, while boosting crop yields notably and keeping seedling emergence rates above 90% in dry periods. "Constrained by local infrastructure, we relied solely on a few small wells to run our demonstration plots in Pakistan. Even so, maize yields on our plots were double the local average," Lin Ping, Deputy Director of Tianye Water-Saving Engineering Center noted. "During last year's dry spell, fields using our irrigation technology were the only ones within a 150-kilometer radius to secure harvests," she underscored. Notwithstanding the evident results

of demonstration programs, Chinese irrigation technologies have struggled to scale across Pakistan. The gap between successful trials and real-world rollout points to structural shortcomings on the ground. "In China, massive investment goes to water conservancy infrastructure to stabilize water supply for large-scale farming. Modern irrigation systems require steady power and water access - conditions that remain unreliable in rural Pakistan," Lin Ping observed. Cost stands as another major barrier. Liu Yalou, Marketing Manager at Shanghai Huawei Agritech Group, stressed that Chinese models provide tailored, all-in-one solutions based on regional conditions, crop types, water availability as well as local budget constraints. Though Chinese technologies boast significantly higher cost-effectiveness than Western or Israeli alternatives, most smallholders still lack affordable credit and government support to cover upfront investments.-DNA

## WAPDA spends Rs1.9 bn on socio-economic development

ISLAMABAD: The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Pakistan has spent Rs1.9 billion on socio-economic development schemes in the Mohmand Dam Project area under its Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), aimed at improving the living standards of local communities. According to WAPDA, a total of Rs4.5 billion has been allocated for 54 development schemes identified by the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in consultation with local representatives as part of the project's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. "So far, Rs1.9 billion has been spent in Phase-I on completion of 18 schemes in the Project area relating to infrastructure development, drinking water, health, education, sports and electricity etc.," WAPDA said in a statement. The authority said work is underway on several major schemes, including the Abazai-Yousuf Banda Road and a drinking water supply project for Sappare Mulagori. WAPDA also announced that construction of five schools will begin soon in the Mohmand, Bajaur and Malakand districts. These include Government Primary School Shaheed Banda, Government Girls Primary School Shaheed Banda and Government Primary School Daryab Kor in Tehsil Pindiyali, along with Government Girls Primary School Johar in Bajaur and Government Girls Primary School Ghwand in Malakand. The update was shared during a meeting reviewing development schemes under the CBMs of the Mohmand Dam Project. WAPDA is constructing the Mohmand Dam Project on the Swat River with a storage capacity of 1.29 million acre-feet (MAF) of water.-DNA

## Former minister demands ruthless accountability

RAWALPINDI: Former Punjab Health Minister Dr. Jamal Nasir has demanded that just as the enemy who dared to challenge the defense of our motherland was decisively subdued and confined within its own boundaries during the battle "Marka-e-Haq", a similar internal battle for justice must now be launched without discrimination against those who have mercilessly plundered the country's wealth and resources, so that the resources belonging to the 240 million people of Pakistan may finally be used to eradicate poverty and improve the lives of the masses. He made these remarks while addressing as chief guest to a ceremony held at Anjuman Faiz-ul-Islam (AFI), Faizabad Markaz in connection with the first anniversary celebrations of the victory in "Marka-e-Haq." The event was presided over by President Anjuman Faizul Islam Professor Dr. Riaz Ahmad and attended by Senior Vice President Mrs. Izhar Fatima, Vice President Lieutenant Colonel (R) Mian Jameel Athar, General Secretary Pervaiz Akhtar, Finance Secretary Raja Sabir Hussain, Joint Secretary Tahir Zia, heads of the educational institutions of the AFI, teachers, and a large number of students. While giving rich tributes to the armed forces of Pakistan, students presented beautiful tableaux, national songs, and speeches. Dr. Jamal Nasir paid glowing tributes to the role of Pakistan's armed forces in defending the country and said that during Marka-e-Haq, our falcons crushed the arrogance of the enemy by defeating it decisively and forced it into confinement within its own borders. He said India had ultimately sought American intervention to secure a ceasefire for its own survival. Dr. Jamal Nasir said the nation takes immense pride in its armed forces. He further stated that after the founding fathers of Pakistan, power unfortunately fell into the hands of those whose forefathers had opposed the creation of Pakistan and these same elements have continued in power while relentlessly looting the nation's wealth and public resources. He stressed that an uncompromising "Marka-e-Haq" must also be waged against every corrupt individual and family, regardless of political, religious, institutional, or any other affiliation. He said that unless this internal struggle and purification are carried out, the shadows of poverty hanging over the people of Pakistan can never be eliminated. Referring to history, he said that after the 1971 war, India had become intoxicated with the illusion of military superiority and was flying high with arrogance, but on May 10, 2025, the sons of Pakistan shattered that illusion forever. He said Pakistan's victory in Marka-e-Haq transformed the global defense landscape and left the entire world astonished. Addressing the gathering, President Anjuman Professor Dr. Riaz Ahmad praised the leadership and soldiers of the armed forces and said that during Marka-e-Haq, Pakistan's falcons revived the spirit and glory of Ghouri and Ghaznavi while exposing the anti-Muslim hostility nurtured by Modi's government over the past twelve years. He added that in accordance with Islamic teachings and the vision of the founder of Pakistan Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's military leadership, despite holding a clear and decisive advantage, continues to extend a message of peace to India. He said the purpose of this message of peace is to ensure that national resources are spent on the welfare and prosperity of the people rather than wasted on wars. He further stated that Modi is still misleading his own nation by falsely claiming that "Operation Sindoor" is continuing and urged him to show mercy to his people. Mrs. Izhar Fatima, Mian Jameel Athar, and other speakers also addressed the ceremony, while Raja Sabir Hussain offered prayers of gratitude to Almighty Allah for the success of Marka-e-Haq and prayed for Pakistan's national security, stability, and progress.-DNA

## Briefs

## Wajiha Qamar visits Qatar Charity Pakistan office

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms. Wajiha Qamar visited the Qatar Charity Pakistan Country Office and discussed avenues for collaboration to promote quality education for underserved communities across the country. Upon her arrival, the Minister was received by Country Director of Qatar Charity Pakistan, Mr. Othman Abu Hijleh. During the visit, the Minister was briefed on the organization's humanitarian and development operations in Pakistan, particularly its contributions in the education sector, said press release on Wednesday. The briefing highlighted Qatar Charity's ongoing initiatives aimed at improving access to education, supporting vulnerable children and strengthening educational infrastructure in marginalized areas. Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Wajiha Qamar appreciated the efforts of Qatar Charity in supporting educational development and social welfare initiatives in Pakistan. She emphasized the government's commitment to enhance partnerships with development organizations working for inclusive and equitable education opportunities.—APP

## Chinese delegation witnesses Senate proceedings

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, Mr. Cai Dafeng, along with his parliamentary delegation, on Wednesday witnessed the proceedings of the Senate. The House gave a standing ovation to the visiting dignitary by thumping desks. Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, while warmly welcoming the Chinese delegation to the House, said that the visit reflected the warmth, trust, and enduring goodwill that define Pakistan-China relations. "This year marks 75 years of our diplomatic ties. We enjoy an ironclad friendship built on mutual respect, unwavering solidarity, and shared purpose. This time-tested cooperative relationship has only grown stronger with the passage of time and continues to inspire confidence among the people of both our countries," the Chairman said. The Chairman said the historic address delivered by former Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to a special joint sitting of the Parliament of Pakistan on December 18, 2010, remains a proud and memorable milestone in parliamentary and diplomatic relations between the two countries.—APP

## IRSA releases 173,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 173,800 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 191,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1450.22 feet which was 50.22 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 82,700 cusecs and 70,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1164.90 feet, which was 114.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 42,77 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taamsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 108,400, 78,100, 59,500, and 17,900 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 42,200 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 7,500 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

## Institute of Home Economics celebrates fashion show

The Final Project Fashion Showcase at Institute of Home Economics, Art and Design shone as a luminous celebration of innovation, craftsmanship, and the boundless power of creative expression

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Institute of Home Economics, Art and Design, F-11/1, Islamabad transformed into a radiant canvas of imagination, artistry, and innovation as the Department of Art & Design proudly presented its much-awaited Final Project Fashion Showcase. The event unfolded as a spectacular celebration of creativity, where artistic dreams took shape and ideas blossomed into breathtaking expressions of wearable art. Parents, faculty members, distinguished guests, and admirers of design gathered to witness an occasion woven with elegance, vision, and youthful brilliance. The showcase beautifully brought together projects developed under Editorial Design, Graphic Communication, Textile Designing & Printing Methods, and Computer-Aided Textile & Apparel Design, where students skillfully merged storytelling with aesthetics, tradition with technology, and imagination with technical mastery. Every ensemble graced the runway as a visual narrative—alive with texture, meaning, and artistic depth. Adding immense prestige and grace to the occasion was the esteemed Chief Guest, Nausheen Sharaf, the visionary force behind Hunar by Nausheen. Renowned for transforming heritage craftsmanship into timeless luxury, her inspiring presence illuminated the event and celebrated the spirit of creativity and entrepreneurship.



A captivating highlight of the showcase was the Textile Designing and Printing Methods II exhibition by the 8th Semester students, where imagination unfolded through meticulously researched themes, handcrafted mood boards, intricate textile compositions, and digitally crafted designs enhanced through CAD and Adobe Illustrator. Collections such as Bloom and Grace, Vintage, Vibrant Motifs, Dreams and Illusions, Crimson Melody, Persian Calligraphy, and Mixed Heritage and British Colonialism painted the runway with romance, nostalgia, cultural dialogue, passion, and poetic storytelling—each design echoing originality and refined craftsmanship. The runway further came alive through com-

pellent theme-based costume presentations developed under Computer-Aided Textile and Apparel Design, where fashion transcended fabric to become a voice for emotion, awareness, fantasy, and global consciousness. Themes including Domestic Violence, Climate Change, Mental Health, Gaza, Paris Fashion Week, Independence Day, Harry Potter, and Light Up the Future transformed the catwalk into a moving tapestry of resilience, imagination, identity, and hope, leaving the audience both inspired and reflective. Adding yet another layer of artistic wonder, the Graphic Communication in Collaboration with Painting category breathed life into celebrated masterpieces, reimagining timeless art through

contemporary design expression. Inspired by iconic works such as The Kiss, The Starry Night, Girl with a Pearl Earring, and Lady with an Ermine, students transformed celebrated visual legacies into living, breathing experiences of color, texture, and emotion. Upholding the cherished tradition of warmth and hospitality, the venerable Principal of Institute of Home Economics, Art and Design, F-11/1, Islamabad, Prof. Rozina Faheem, graciously presented a token of gratitude to the esteemed Chief Guest, Nausheen Sharaf. This thoughtful gesture beautifully reflected the spirit of appreciation, mutual respect, and admiration, adding yet another graceful moment to a showcase adorned with artistic excellence and inspiration.

## WAPDA Security Force Bill, 2026 introduced in NA

ISLAMABAD: A bill to provide for the constitution and regulation of the Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority Security Force, titled The WAPDA Security Force Bill, 2026, was introduced in the National Assembly on Wednesday. The bill was moved by Federal Minister for Water Resources Muhammad Mueen Wattoo. Following its introduction, the House referred the bill to the relevant committee for further deliberation and consideration.—APP

## ANF arrests seven suspects

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) conducted seven operations across the country on Wednesday and arrested seven suspects, including a woman, and recovered 502.91 kilograms (kgs) of narcotics worth more than Rs 39.8 million. According to an ANF spokesman, as part of operations near educational institutions, ANF recovered 1.2 kgs of hashish from a suspect near a university in Hayatabad, Peshawar. The accused later confessed to supplying drugs to students of educational institutions. In an international drug interdiction operation at Islamabad International Airport, officials recovered 1.582 kgs of ecstasy pills concealed in a calcium box from the possession of a female passenger travelling to Dubai. In another operation near Jinnah International Airport, ANF recovered 3.9 kgs of ice concealed in clothing from a parcel destined for Saudi Arabia. Separately, officials at a courier office at Islamabad Airport seized 310 grams of heroin from a parcel bound for the United Kingdom. Under domestic drug interdiction operations, ANF recovered 18 kgs of opium from a vehicle near a petrol pump on Ring Road in Peshawar and arrested two suspects. In another operation near Faizpur in Lahore, ANF recovered 22.8 kgs of hashish, two kgs of opium and 700 grams of ice from a suspect. Meanwhile, a major operation near Turbat in District Kech led to the recovery of 451 kgs of hashish, the spokesman said. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Control of Narcotic Substances Act (CNESA) 1997, while further investigations are underway.

## Pakistan's population surge a demographic drag

ISLAMABAD: Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday said Pakistan's rapid population growth was a "ticking time bomb" that was exerting unbearable pressure on the country's already strained resources. Chaired a high-level meeting of the Population Council, Senator Rehman warned that Pakistan was heading towards a population explosion that threatens basic rights and the country's long-term sustainability. "Our population is projected to reach 390 million by 2050, marking an alarming 62% increase. By then, 256 million people will be in the job market, more than our existing total population. This is no longer a demographic dividend. It has become a demographic drag," she stated. Calling for political ownership at every level, Senator Rehman urged lawmakers across the political spectrum to unite behind a shared national commitment. "Our commitment is across all parties, and it is extremely heartening. But this is not something we can commit to only on paper," she said. "We need powerful messaging, local and provincial ownership, and multi-party support that follows through. Pakistan is facing population numbers that directly endanger our people's fundamental rights, the right to clean water, clean air, life, and dignity", she added. She emphasized that population planning must be embedded into budget conversations, economic planning, and development frameworks. Highlighting the crisis of malnutrition and poverty, Senator Rehman noted that 40 percent of children under five were stunted, an alarming indicator of chronic undernourishment and a failing system. "Forty percent stunting should be enough of a wake-up call for all of us. We defend many frontiers as a nation, but these are our real trenches," she said. She added that 42% of Pakistan's population lived below the poverty line, and cultural norms, particularly in rural economies, encourage families to have six to seven children, even when they can barely feed one or two. This directly threatens the life, health, and food security of every infant and child. It affects education, entrenches inequality, and pushes women into the background of every social and economic decision", she said. Senator Rehman underscored the urgent need to improve the contraceptive prevalence rate, noting that many contraceptives were imported and already difficult to access for low-income households due to high price. Senator Rehman appreciated the Population Council's efforts in keeping the issue alive on national policy agendas.—DNA

## K-IV project to be completed by December 2026: NA told

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Water Resources Muhammad Mueen Wattoo on Wednesday informed the National Assembly that the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme (K-IV) is a major and important project aimed at improving water supply for Karachi residents and is expected to be completed by December 2026. Responding to a calling attention notice regarding delays in the K-IV project despite significant expenditure, the minister said the scheme is being executed under the responsibility of WAPDA and the federal government. He informed the House that so far, Rs 94.67 billion has been spent on the project by the federal government. The minister

said that under the scheme, water will be supplied to three key points in Karachi, which fall under the jurisdiction and responsibility of WAPDA and the federal government. He added that around 67.9 per cent of the overall work on the project has been completed so far, expressing confidence that there would be no delay in the federally managed portion of the scheme and that it would be completed within the stipulated timeframe. Muhammad Mueen Wattoo further said that if required, a meeting of all stakeholders and relevant authorities could be convened in Karachi to review progress and strengthen accountability regarding the project's execution.—APP

## Syedaal Khan stresses higher education

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman of the Senate Syedaal Khan on Wednesday held separate meetings at the Parliament House in Islamabad with various prominent personalities, government officials, representatives of educational institutions, social and media figures, and delegations. The meetings focused on key national issues, including institutional reforms, promotion of higher education, cultural harmony, austerity measures, and the overall political and social situation of the country. Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting and Managing Director Pakistan Television Corporation, Ashfaq Ahmad Khalil, called on the Deputy Chairman of the Senate. During the meeting, discussions were held on the performance of national broadcasting institutions, ongoing reforms, and steps to align these institutions with modern requirements. Syedaal Khan appreciated the role of Pakistan Television Corporation and Radio Pakistan, stating that both institutions play a vital role in public awareness, education, and promotion of national consciousness. He said PTV has consistently contributed to national unity, cultural harmony, and projecting a positive national image,

while serving as an effective source of information, education, and entertainment, including in remote areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. MD PTV Ashfaq Ahmad Khalil briefed him on ongoing institutional reforms, expansion of digital platforms, and initiatives through PTV World to project Pakistan's image globally. The Deputy Chairman of the Senate expressed satisfaction over PTV's performance and noted that national institutions are playing an important role in promoting regional languages, cultures, and traditions. In another meeting, the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan called on the Deputy Chairman of the Senate. The meeting discussed promotion of higher education in Balochistan, establishment of new universities, provision of educational facilities, research development, and improvement of digital systems. Syedaal Khan said providing quality and modern educational opportunities to the youth of Balochistan was essential for national development and stability. He stressed strengthening existing institutions through modern research facilities, improved infrastructure, digital resources, and advanced teaching tools.—APP

## Ahsan says Pakistan-China friendship never saw 'moment of autumn,'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday said Pakistan-China friendship had "never seen a moment of autumn" during the past 75 years and remained resilient through mutual trust, unwavering cooperation and shared aspirations. Addressing a Pakistan-China cultural event held to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries at the Pakistan-China Friendship Centre, he said the friendship between Islamabad and Beijing had continued to flourish in the "season of spring" with every passing year. The cultural event was co-hosted by the Diplomatic Insight Group (DIG), in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, UNI International, the Pakistan-Chinese Education Association and partner organizations. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Deputy Head of

Mission at the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad Shi Yuanqiang were also present on the occasion. Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan and China had emerged as all-weather strategic partners and "iron brothers" who stood shoulder to shoulder in times of peace and challenges. "Our friendship is higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the sea, sweeter than honey and stronger than steel," he remarked, adding that the relationship had now reached "even higher than the skies" as Pakistan's first astronaut would join a Chinese space mission in 2026. Highlighting the significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the minister said the project was not merely a network of roads and energy plants but a gateway to shared prosperity and socio-economic transformation. "CPEC is a bridge of development and the most concrete economic manifestation of our time-tested brotherhood," he said. The minister said from

energy security to digital connectivity and Gwadar Port to Special Economic Zones, CPEC had opened a new chapter of strategic cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Recalling the launch of CPEC in 2013, he said Pakistan had been facing severe electricity shortages and security challenges at the time. "When no one was willing to invest in Pakistan, China came forward and invested billions of dollars to help Pakistan overcome its energy crisis," he said, adding that China had demonstrated at every critical moment that it was more than a friend and truly an "iron brother." Ahsan Iqbal paid tribute to Chinese engineers and workers engaged in development projects in Pakistan, particularly those associated with CPEC initiatives. He said thousands of Chinese workers had stayed away from their homes and families for years to contribute to Pakistan's development journey.—APP

## NA urged to curb fake news as house stands with Pervaiz Ashraf over allegations

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday said that the entire House stood with Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and any inappropriate campaign against a respected parliamentarian would be dealt with at the government level. On the floor of the House, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf informed members about a social media clip circulated on May 18 in which a woman under investigation for drug smuggling allegedly mentioned his name during a court appearance. Speaking in the National Assembly of Pakistan, the minister said reactions over the past two days from the public and lawmakers had already demonstrated that the allegations against the respected member were "frivolous and baseless" and were not taken seriously by the public. Azam Nazeer Tarar appreciated the Speaker of the National Assembly for referring the matter to the Interior Committee, calling it the appropriate forum for deliberation and inquiry. He said that based on his 30 years of legal practice, particularly in criminal law, it appeared that "petty criminals" often use the names of prominent personalities to divert attention from their own cases. The minister urged electronic media outlets and regulatory authorities to exercise caution while reporting sensitive matters, emphasizing that decency, morality, and the fundamental rights of individuals must be respected. He said repeatedly airing scandalous content without verification could damage the dignity, honour, and privacy of individuals. He added that while the public had the right to information, the media must ensure that reporting does not violate the constitutional rights and personal dignity of any citizen. He further noted that several members of the House had themselves faced similar situations in the past and therefore understood the consequences of irresponsible reporting. The minister assured the House that the matter would be thoroughly investigated, including examining why the statement in question had been issued and whether it was based on facts. He said that if any wrongdoing was established, those responsible would be held accountable and the House would be informed accordingly. Azam Nazeer Tarar also stressed the need for effective implementation of existing laws against the spread of false and scandalous news, saying the government would consult political parties and relevant stakeholders to strengthen safeguards against such practices in the future.—APP

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 07 Issue:195

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

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## How Arab world should react to US-China power shift

DR. RAMZY BAROUD

US President Donald Trump's state visit to China last week will go down in history as the moment the US finally acknowledged Beijing's ascendancy as a global superpower. That acknowledgment does not need to be articulated in a formal statement; it can be clearly read in the subtext of diplomatic behavior, global perception and shifting media coverage.

During the summit, Trump's delegation – which included prominent American corporate leaders – engaged with President Xi Jinping not from a position of absolute global dictation, but through a lens of defensive pragmatism. This transactional approach focused on securing bilateral trade commitments and preventing catastrophic economic friction. The spectacle of the leader of the Western world navigating Beijing's terms, while actively managing domestic economic anxieties, signals a profound shift. The traditional American posture of undisputed global hegemony has transformed into that of a major power among equals, seeking stable terms of coexistence with an unignorable rival. The moment is comparable only with Richard Nixon's historic 1972 visit to Beijing, though the circumstances are entirely different. Back then, the US' aim was to exploit the Sino-Soviet split and gain leverage over the Soviet Union in exchange for the normalization of diplomatic ties. Trump's visit to China appeared to be more about a declining empire attempting to manage its own contraction. In 1972, China was an economically isolated, agrarian society recovering from internal upheaval. Today, Beijing is a financial giant that boasts the world's largest economy by purchasing power parity, a critical hub of global supply chains, and a leader in next-generation technologies like artificial intelligence. Militarily, the People's Liberation Army has transformed into a powerful navy and high-tech force capable of denying access to the Western Pacific. This vast economic and military expansion translates into unparalleled global influence, altering the balance of power across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

With all this in mind, Trump's visit to China appeared to be more about a declining empire attempting to manage its own contraction – a move that will likely lead to serious concessions. Beijing's approach to the Middle East is fundamentally different to that of the US. The latter inherited the colonial legacy of Britain and France. Though Washington resists seeing itself as a colonial power, it behaves like one: leveraging military might to achieve political dominance and economic privileges. China is different. Free of the baggage of a regional colonial past – and having historical memory as a survivor of Western imperialism itself – China's expansion utilizes an alternative model: economic integration, development and trade ties. However, this model could alter should circumstances change. If Beijing finds itself



forced to defend its massive interests and energy routes, it may adopt a more muscular posture, similar to its current assertive strategy in the South China Sea.

US influence in the Middle East has been waning for years and the latest US National Defense Strategy, published early this year, is proof of that. The document explicitly anchors American military priorities to a homeland-first posture and the containment of China in the Indo-Pacific. By formally invoking the Monroe Doctrine to focus on the Western Hemisphere and emphasizing conditional support for allies, Washington's own policy papers reveal a strategic retrenchment and an admission of overstretch. In this context, the destructive US-Israeli escalations against Iran should not be seen as an American return to the Middle East, but as a desperate attempt to maintain relevance. This echoes the 1956 tripartite aggression against Egypt by Britain, France and Israel. Just as that ill-fated campaign was a desperate, violent attempt by dying European empires to demonstrate Western relevance after the devastating toll of the Second World War, the current US-Israeli actions are the volatile spasms of a fading hegemony. Considering China's global agenda of expansion and integration, Beijing is likely to find itself the new global player in our region, although such a role can be shaped to mean partnership as opposed to dominance. An American exit would create political margins that Arab countries must exploit and fill on their own terms. Aristotle, warning against the "horror vacui" (horror of the vacuum), proposed that every space must be filled with something. Likewise, if the US exits the Middle East or its presence continues to dwindle, that political space will not remain empty. For the Arab world, the future carries both a challenge and an immense opportunity. An American exit would create political margins that Arab countries must exploit and fill on their own terms. If they do not, others will. Arab nations, like others in the Global South, fully understand the danger of vulnerability during seismic global changes as great powers jockey for influence. They also recognize how US behavior – acting as Israel's enabler while failing to dictate regional outcomes – only contributes to Washington's strategic desperation. This desperation could lead to a sudden, chaotic US exit, leaving an aggressive Israel to expand as a local hegemon, or it could prompt more nonstrategic military campaigns with dire consequences. All of this leaves Middle Eastern nations hostage to a volatile US foreign policy, granting opportunities for an expansionist Israel to unleash more chaos. This moment, therefore, calls for total Arab political clarity and unity, insisting on real sovereignty and the freedom to act based on the interests of the people. This new agenda should prioritize human development and economic prosperity, alongside equality and social justice. Moreover, Arabs should achieve a new political contract that rejects further foreign meddling or military interventions, holding any government that deviates from this principle accountable. Finally, a unified Arab position must move past mere rhetoric into concrete action to hold Israel accountable, working ceaselessly toward the freedom of Palestine and ending the illegal occupation of Lebanese and Syrian lands. Arab political outlooks must leverage these issues in all future integrations with global players, including China, to ensure that the century-long cycle of violence wreaked by Western colonialism is over for good.

## Guardian of the Gulf: Pakistan's Noble Role in Troubled Times

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Narendra Modi faced criticism from every quarter. The Prime Minister Modi attempted, through a succession of public spectacles, to spin the narrative in his favour, yet no amount of ceremony could erase the stain of that crushing setback. At the very moment when Pakistan was extending its influence through measured statesmanship, fresh troubles erupted in the Gulf. Once again, Pakistan demonstrated its value to the region and to the world

In the May of 2025, Pakistan confronted Indian aggression with a firmness that brought its neighbour sharply to its senses. The episode, brief yet decisive, marked a turning point not only on the battlefield but in the wider theatre of international affairs. While Indian forces reeled from a military reverse they had not anticipated, the United States President himself spoke repeatedly, on every global platform, of India's defeat. In doing so, he lent official weight to a reality that New Delhi desperately wished to obscure. Pakistan, having prevailed in arms, moved with equal success upon the diplomatic front. Across the Gulf and in the capitals of Europe, Islamabad's voice carried authority; India, by contrast, found itself scarcely noticed as a responsible actor.

Within India, the government of Narendra Modi faced criticism from every quarter. The Prime Minister Modi attempted, through a succession of public spectacles, to spin the narrative in his favour, yet no amount of ceremony could erase the stain of that crushing setback. At the very moment when Pakistan was extending its influence through measured statesmanship, fresh troubles erupted in the Gulf. Once again, Pakistan demonstrated its value to the region and to the world. Through patient persuasion directed at the Gulf states and the United States alike, Islamabad helped open channels of dialogue and played a central role in halting the drift toward wider conflict. The contrast with India could hardly have been starker. While Pakistan laboured to extinguish flames, New Delhi appeared content to watch them spread, consumed by its own jealousy and resentment. Even the American President, during a recent visit to China, openly acknowledged that it was at Pakistan's urging that the war had been arrested. The admission only deepened Indian irritation. Throughout these turbulent weeks, India's questionable alignments became increasingly visible. Its willingness to inform Israeli interests of Iranian ship movements, and its tacit support for actions against Iran, placed it firmly on one side of a dangerous regional divide. Yet Iran, facing determined adversaries, emerged largely successful. The Islamic Republic dismantled much of the

mischief that Israel, grown bold in its regional conduct, had sought to perpetrate. In such a climate, India's attempts to insert itself into Gulf affairs met with little welcome. Pakistani diplomacy, rooted in conciliation rather than confrontation, ensured that doors remained closed to New Delhi's overtures. When Israel found itself pressed by war, it turned once more to its established ties with the United Arab Emirates. India, excluded from the broader game, sought to deepen those same connections through Israeli cooperation, positioning itself as an indirect sympathiser of both states. Israel, alongside India, has also worked to widen differences among the Gulf countries, clearly aiming to shatter the unity of the Muslim Ummah. There exists, moreover, a real possibility that Israel itself may launch missile or drone attacks against Muslim nations in the region and then seek to lay the blame at the door of another Muslim state. Pakistani observers have noted these manoeuvres with due vigilance.

On this occasion, India may yet attempt further mischief by seeking to seduce the UAE into sending Pakistanis living there back to their homeland, offering in return to dispatch Indian skilled workers to fill the gap. Such designs, however, shall not succeed, God willing. In the midst of the Gulf crisis, Pakistan maintained open and cordial contact with every concerned nation. The Gulf states, in turn, expressed genuine appreciation for Islamabad's efforts to restore peace. Pakistan's conduct stood in honourable contrast to India's. New Delhi, employing tactics both insidious and false, attempted to poison relations by claiming that when Iranian missiles struck UAE territory, Pakistan had sided with Iran and abandoned its old friend. Nothing could have been further from the truth. At every stage, Pakistan worked to dampen the fires of war while India, guided by narrow self-interest, strove only to feed them.

History itself testifies to the depth of Pakistan's commitment to the United Arab Emirates. In the 1970s, it was Pakistani diplomacy and support that helped bring the separate emirates together into a single, stable federation. Pakistani expertise and labour contributed substantially to the remarkable development that followed. Those bonds remain strong and multifaceted. Today, as India pursues policies of division and mischief, Pakistan stands ready once more to counter them with the instruments of diplomacy and goodwill. The present leadership in Islamabad possesses both the vision and the capacity for such work.

In the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan is ably represented by Ambassador Shafiqat Ali Khan, a seasoned diplomat who previously served as spokesperson for the Foreign Office and gained valuable experience in the National Assembly. His appointment reflects the seriousness with which Pakistan views this vital relationship. The ties between the two countries run deep, forged in shared history and mutual respect. At a time when the Muslim world faces numerous challenges, Pakistan continues to advocate for unity within the Ummah, urging brethren nations to rise above transient differences and stand together in dignity and strength.

The recent crises have illuminated a clear distinction. Pakistan has shown itself a force for stability, a nation willing to invest its prestige in the cause of peace. India, by contrast, has appeared driven by grievance and opportunism. As the dust settles across the Gulf and beyond, the international community would do well to reflect upon which country truly served the interests of regional harmony. Pakistan's conduct has earned it respect; its future course, guided by the same principles, promises to reinforce that standing. In a fractured world, such consistency remains both rare and precious.

## New realignments rise from ruins of the Iran war

Osama Al-Sharif

Among the more sobering surprises were Iran's strikes against Gulf neighbors, targeting military, energy and civilian infrastructure with alarming brazenness.

Tehran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz throttled the economies of the industrial world and triggered an unprecedented global energy crisis.

Meanwhile, US and Israeli strikes fell short of their declared objectives: the Iranian regime, severely wounded, did not collapse and the new leadership emerged more hard-line than before, unmoved by American pressure

THE US-Israeli war on Iran may not yet be over but its ramifications for the region's security architecture are already being felt from Riyadh to Ankara and from Abu Dhabi to Cairo. Nearly every country in the Middle East has been adversely affected by the military and economic fallout – consequences that neither Washington nor its regional allies and partners had anticipated in their complexity or depth. Among the more sobering surprises were Iran's strikes against Gulf neighbors, targeting military, energy and civilian infrastructure with alarming brazenness. Tehran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz throttled the economies of the industrial world and triggered an unprecedented global energy crisis. Meanwhile, US and Israeli strikes fell short of their declared objectives: the Iranian regime, severely wounded, did not collapse and the new leadership emerged more hard-line than before, unmoved by American pressure. The resulting stalemate has left the region in limbo. A resumption of hostilities risks further Iranian reprisals against neighboring states, while a breakdown in negotiations leaves the Hormuz crisis unresolved – and the region's economic arteries vulnerable. The war has torn open a geopolitical fault line, undermining decades of regional security alignments. The war has torn open a geopolitical fault line, undermining decades of regional security alignments. Gulf Arab states, which had long outsourced their security to Washington, operated under the assumption that the US presence alone would deter Iran from firing missiles or closing the strait. That assumption has been shattered. While dependence on America is unlikely to disappear overnight, the crisis has been a sobering wake-up call for Gulf leaders. At least three strategic shifts are now underway, individually and collectively. The first is consolidating the Gulf Cooperation Council's joint defense architecture to reflect new realities: a modern antir drone system, a capable an-

timizing naval force and a significantly upgraded air defense network. The second involves deepening regional alliances. Saudi Arabia, for example, has activated a defense cooperation pact with Pakistan, strengthening military ties with Türkiye and Egypt, and is reinforcing its leadership role in the Islamic world. The third is pursuing a comprehensive nonaggression agreement with Iran – one that individual states or the GCC as a bloc could negotiate once hostilities end and the nuclear threat is contained. None of these realignments contradict existing security arrangements with Washington. On the contrary, they acknowledge the reality that the US will continue its strategic pivot toward Asia, under this administration or the next. Netanyahu's rhetoric about forging a new Middle East resonates uneasily in Riyadh, Cairo and Ankara. The signals of this reconfiguration are already visible. Saudi Arabia convened an emergency consultative summit of Arab and Islamic foreign ministers whose joint statement broke new ground – explicitly condemning Iranian attacks and calling for unified regional positions. Egypt and Jordan have backed Gulf states in language that would have been diplomatically unthinkable five years ago. From Ankara to Islamabad, capitals are quietly exploring new security frameworks: nonaggression pacts, postwar defense arrangements and coordination mechanisms that look beyond the current crisis toward a more stable regional order. There is another dimension that regional capitals cannot ignore. This was openly a joint US-Israeli war, launched – as most analysts agree – largely at the behest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who continues to shape the negotiations and their trajectory. Netanyahu has been explicit: the war is not over and he wants Donald Trump to resume strikes despite the political costs to the American president and his party. Trump, for his part, did little to consult his Arab allies, who were given no warning before the February attacks on Iran. Netanyahu's rhetoric about forging a new

Middle East with Israel as its dominant power goes far beyond neutralizing Iran's military capabilities – and it resonates uneasily in Riyadh, Cairo and Ankara. This is not an outcome regional leaders are willing to accept. What may ultimately emerge from this war is a post-American, multialigned Middle East: more transactional, more self-reliant and considerably less predictable. At some point, regional states will have to negotiate with Iran and reach agreements grounded in mutual respect for sovereignty, freedom of navigation in the Gulf and shared security arrangements. The US, increasingly focused on China, will remain a partner – but no longer a guarantor. Writing in Foreign Affairs this week, David B. Roberts argued that Gulf states must stop treating security as a commodity and begin building the regional capabilities and political arrangements that serve their own long-term interests. He proposed a comprehensive treaty between the Gulf states, the US and Iran, centered on a phased American military withdrawal from the Gulf – tied to verifiable Iranian concessions. In exchange for sanctions relief and normalization incentives, Tehran would accept strict limits on its nuclear and missile programs, curbs on drone transfers and proxy activity, and robust inspection regimes. Such a withdrawal would reduce the structural driver of Iranian hostility while preserving a US commitment, enshrined in a treaty, to return swiftly if threats resurface. A future American administration may well choose to relocate its military resources away from the Middle East. Even Trump has suggested that the US is neither dependent on Middle Eastern oil nor obligated to keep the Strait of Hormuz open. That statement alone underscores the urgency of building a new regional security framework – one grounded in sustainable realignments rather than the assumptions of a passing era. Saudi Arabia's evolving strategic posture in the wake of the Iran crisis is a promising start.

—The writer is a journalist and political commentator based in Amman. X: @plato010

## Briefs

## Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping...

FROM PAGE 01  
"continuously deepened our political mutual trust and strategic coordination with a resilience that remains unyielding", Xi told the Russian leader, according to Chinese state media. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend a bilateral meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China May 20, 2026. — Reuters  
Putin, meanwhile, told Xi relations had reached and "unprecedentedly high level" despite "unfavourable external factors", without naming any third country, video from Russian media showed. Xi warned of "unilateral and hegemonic countercurrents running rampant", in a veiled swipe at the United States. Xi has played host to a series of world leaders as an increasingly unpredictable United States under Trump pushed many to shore up alliances with Beijing, and the war in Iran has further accelerated the trend. Russia-China ties have deepened since Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, with Putin visiting Beijing every year since as his country is shunned by Western powers. Putin's visit promises to be less opulent than Trump's, emphasising that "the Xi-Putin relationship does not require that kind of performative reassurance", said Patricia Kim from the Brookings Institution in Washington. Xi welcomed Putin with open arms as an "old friend" when he last visited Beijing in September 2025 — language the Chinese leader did not extend to Trump last week. Beijing has regularly called for talks to end the war in Ukraine but has never condemned Russia for sending in troops, presenting itself instead as a neutral party.

## Centre assures KP of restoring...

FROM PAGE 01  
Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) Managing Director Amer Tufail Flour, wheat supply crisis addressed in a separate decision, the federal government directed the Punjab government to immediately remove obstacles in the transportation of wheat and flour to other provinces, following growing concerns over supply disruptions affecting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to government sources, the Ministry of National Food Security provided the KP government with a WhatsApp number through which flour and wheat dealers could share videos and photographs if they faced hurdles while transporting supplies from Punjab. The sources said the decision to remove barriers in the transportation of flour and wheat to KP was taken during a high-level meeting attended by Federal Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain and food secretaries from all four provinces.

## UN chief wants end to hostilities

FROM PAGE 01  
where intermittent clashes and ceasefire breaches have raised concerns among international observers about the risk of a broader regional escalation. He reaffirmed that sustained diplomatic engagement remains the only viable path forward, urging all parties to prioritise civilian protection and humanitarian access in affected areas.

## Shehbaz meets UK Jonathan...

FROM PAGE 01  
the warm and cordial telephone conversation between the two leaders last month, wherein they had expressed a shared desire to further strengthen Pakistan-UK ties. Mr. Powell conveyed the appreciation of His Majesty's Government for Pakistan's constructive role in regional diplomacy, including its ongoing efforts to facilitate dialogue and de-escalation in the broader region.

## Captain Shan to step down

Bangladesh humiliate Pakistan in Test series  
*Pakistani cricketers put up a poor show; fans demand action against under-performers*

SPORTS DESK

SYLHET: Bangladesh beat Pakistan by 78 runs in the second Test at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium on Wednesday to clinch the two-match series 2-0. Pakistan travel guides Chasing a mammoth 437, Pakistan were bowled out for 358, handing the hosts a comprehensive victory and a series whitewash. After resuming on day five following a brief rain interruption, Mohammad Rizwan and Sajid Khan added valuable runs in quick time, putting together a key 50-plus stand that pushed the total beyond 350. The partnership was eventually ended by Tajul Islam, who removed Sajid Khan for 28 off 36 balls, a brisk innings featuring

five fours. Soon after, Pakistan lost another wicket when Shoriful Islam dismissed Mohammad Rizwan for a superb 94 off 166 deliveries, an innings decorated with 10 boundaries. Tajul Islam then completed his six-wicket haul by cleaning up Khurram Shahzad for a duck, bringing the innings and the match to a close. The Green Shirts had a shaky start to the chase as both openers were removed for 41 runs. Babar Azam and skipper Shan Masood then steadied the innings with a vital third-wicket partnership, guiding Pakistan past the 100-run mark. Babar fell after a fighting 47, while Saud Shakeel managed just six, leaving Pakistan under pressure at 154-4. Shan resisted with a composed 71, but was eventually dismissed by Tajul as Pakistan slipped further. Despite the collapse,

Rizwan and Salman rebuilt the innings with a crucial stand that pushed Pakistan beyond 200 runs and briefly stabilised the chase. However, the 134-run partnership was eventually broken when Tajul struck again, removing Salman for a well-compiled 71. Hasan Ali was also removed by Tajul as Pakistan finished Day 4 on 316-7. Earlier in their first innings, Bangladesh were bowled out for 278 despite slipping to 116/6, largely due to a composed and commanding innings from Litton Das, who held the innings together and guided the lower order. The right-handed batter top-scored with a magnificent 126, decorated with 16 fours and two sixes. For Pakistan, Shahzad was the standout bowler, finishing with four wickets for 81 runs in 17 overs. Abbas took three wickets. In reply, Pakistan were bun-

dled out for 232 in 57.4 overs, handing the hosts a 46-run lead. Babar Azam top-scored with a fighting 68, while Sajid contributed valuable runs down the order, scoring 38. Pacer Nahid Rana and spinner Tajul Islam led the Bangladesh attack with three wickets each, while Taskin Ahmed and Mehidy Hasan Miraz claimed two wickets apiece. Bangladesh started their second innings with a 46-run lead and set a 437-run target for Pakistan. Mushfiqur Rahim struck a superb 137, supported by Litton Das and Mahmudul Hasan Joy. Pakistan travel guides Khurram Shahzad again impressed with four wickets, while Sajid Khan took three and Hasan Ali and Abbas shared the remaining scalps. Meanwhile, Test team Captain Shan Masood has hinted at stepping down as the Captain of Pakistan team.

## At UN, Pakistan highlights Markhor

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: The Markhor, Pakistan's national animal, is a celebrated conservation success story, Pakistani Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad told a side-event marking the International Day of the Markhor at UN Headquarters in New York. "Once teetering on the brink of extinction, the 'mountain monarch's' population steadily rebounded over the past decade, he said at the event convened by the Permanent Missions of Pakistan and Tajikistan in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Today, the Pakistani envoy added, this revival serves as a global model for community-driven wildlife protection. Native to the rugged, high-altitude mountains of the country, Markhor rep-

resents the majestic, untamed beauty of Pakistan's northern landscapes and its rich biodiversity. Monday's gathering brought together diplomats, UN officials, conservation experts and environmental partners to spotlight the Markhor as an iconic species of Central and South Asia and a flagship for the protection of fragile mountain ecosystems. In his remarks, Ambassador Asim Ahmad warned of the challenges, such as climate change, which is fundamentally altering the ecosystems that the Markhor depends upon. The shifting tree lines and prolonged rainfall deficits are exposing oak forests — a primary food source for the Markhor — to new disease pressures and vegetation loss. He described warming temperatures as driving apex predators like the snow leopard to ever higher altitudes in parts of Pakistan, thus compounding the

problem. He said that the situation has disrupted the predator hierarchy, with lynx and other predators now roaming freely and hunting Markhor kids far more intensively. "While Pakistan has made significant strides against poaching, illegal hunting remains a persistent threat across the species' range states; These are not isolated pressures — they are interconnected, and they are accelerating," he said. The Markhor, he added, has defied extinction once, but sustaining that recovery demands more than national will, adding that it demands scaled-up international cooperation to address new and emerging challenges. In his keynote address, Bahodur Sheralozoda, Chairman of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of Tajikistan, highlighted his country's successful recovery of the Markhor pop-

ulation, which had fallen to nearly 300 in the 1990s and has since increased to more than 7,000 through scientific monitoring, community-based protection, political will and responsible wildlife management. Jamil Ahmad, Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, placed the Markhor conservation within the broader environmental crisis facing mountain regions. He warned that highlands are warming faster than lowlands, with glacier melt, snow cover decline, permafrost thaw and water stress placing ecosystems, livelihoods and energy investments at risk. Dr. Sofie Sandström Jaffe, Permanent Observer of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, said the International Day of the Markhor recognizes both an iconic species and the mountain ecosystems on which nearly half of the world's biodiversity hotspots depend.

## Oman signs a scientific agreement with CERN

GENEVA: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education, on Tuesday signed a scientific and technical cooperation agreement with the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) at the organisation's headquarters in Geneva, in a step that enhances the presence of the Sultanate of Oman in the international scientific research system. The agreement was signed on behalf of the Omani side by Ambassador Mahmoud Hamad Al Hasani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Swiss Confederation, and on behalf of the organisation by Professor Mark Thomson, Director-General of the European Organization for Nuclear Research. The agreement establishes a framework for joint cooperation in the field of high-energy physics, including the exchange of scientific personnel, knowledge and equipment, and opening the way for Omani scientists, engineers and students to join the organisation's research and training programs in experimental and theoretical physics, accelerator engineering, computing, artificial intelligence, information security and advanced materials science. The Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Swiss Confederation affirmed that this partnership embodies a clear direction under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik towards building a knowledge economy, noting that the agreement opens the doors of cooperation for Omani cadres with one of the most prestigious research centers in the world. The agreement is valid for five years and is automatically renewable. It establishes a mechanism for concluding detailed protocols with scientific and university institutions in the Sultanate of Oman, enabling the translation of cooperation into actual, measurable research projects. The European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) is one of the world's leading scientific research centers, with 23 member states, and many other countries cooperate with it under similar agreements. — APP

## Sohail Sakhi summits Kanchenjunga, world's third highest peak

*The achievement has further cemented Pakistan's growing reputation in the global mountaineering community*

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani high-altitude climber Sohail Sakhi from Hunza has successfully summited Kanchenjunga (8,586 metres), the world's third-highest mountain, adding another feather to Pakistan's cap in the world of mountaineering. Sohail reached the summit of the Nepali peak at 12:12 AM local time on Wednesday as part of the rope-fixing team, a technically demanding and crucial role in any high-altitude expedition. The achievement has further cemented Pakistan's growing reputation in the global mountaineering community. A seasoned high-altitude climber, Sohail has an impressive record of scaling some of the world's most formidable peaks, having previously summited K2, Nanga Parbat, Gasherbrum I and Gasherbrum II — all without the use of supplemental oxygen. — APP

## Pakistani exhibitors showcase mineral wealth

NANJING: Pakistani exhibitors highlighted the country's vast mineral and gemstone resources at the 2026 China (Nanjing) International Mineral Gemstone & Fossil Expo (CIMGE), held from May 14 to 18 at the Nanjing International Exhibition Center (NIEC), as China's growing gemstone market opened new opportunities for international traders and collectors. The exhibition attracted participants from more than 50 countries and regions, including Pakistan, Peru, the United States and Switzerland, with international exhibitors making up over 25 percent of the total participants. Spread across 65,000 square meters, the expo featured dedicated sections for domestic and international mineral crystals, fossils and meteorites, jewelry, and educational displays. At least ten Pakistani companies participated in the event, showcasing mineral specimens and gemstones including emeralds, tourmalines, topaz, morganite, quartz, aquamarine and crystals sourced from Gilgit-Baltistan, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. For many exhibitors, the expo represented more than just a sales opportunity, according to CEN, which reported on the event on Wednesday. Liaqat of Pakistan Astor Gems and Minerals told China Economic Net that China is a large and vibrant market, adding that Chinese collectors are becoming increasingly

knowledgeable about mineral specimens and gemstones and are gradually embracing gemstones as everyday wearable items. The growing presence of Pakistani exhibitors at China's leading gemstone fairs reflects deepening mineral cooperation between the two countries. According to China customs data, Pakistan's exports of unworked precious and semi-precious stones (HS Code 71031000) to China surged by around 145.7 percent year-on-year to \$783,890 during the first four months of this year. The increasing trade momentum has also been supported by high-level bilateral engagement. Earlier this year, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, addressed the China-Pakistan Mineral Cooperation Forum, saying the two countries were entering a decisive new phase of economic partnership by placing mineral development at the center of CPEC 2.0. He said the initiative aims to transform connectivity into productivity, exports and sustainable economic growth. Pakistan possesses globally rare and high-quality gemstone resources, with total national reserves estimated at around \$450 billion. The country has approximately 92 known minerals, of which 52 are currently being extracted. Pakistan also has nearly 5,000 operational mines and annual mineral production of about 68.5 million metric tons. — APP

## PFF, UN Pakistan Launch Football for Mental Health Initiative

*"Youth are our future, and their mental and physical wellbeing must remain our top priority," Gilani said, emphasizing that bringing positive social change through sports is a key part of the federation's vision*

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) and United Nations (UN) Pakistan have joined hands to promote youth mental wellbeing through sports by signing a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the launch of the "Football for Mental Health" initiative. The MoU was signed by PFF President Mohsen Gilani and United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan Mohammad Yahya during a ceremony held in Islamabad. The event was attended by Pakistan women's football team captain Maria Khan, Lahore Qalandars Chief Executive Officer Atif Rana, PFF Chief Executive Officer Shahid Khokhar and prominent personalities from various walks of life. Under the MoU, a series of phased "Football for Mental Health" programmes will be organized across the country to raise awareness about mental health issues among youth while promoting positivity, confidence, hope and emotional wellbeing through football. Speaking on the occasion, Mohsen Gilani said football is not merely a sport but also a powerful tool to improve the mental health of young people. He stated that the Pakistan Football Federation is committed not only to the physical development of youth but also to their mental wellbeing.



He added that the partnership with the United Nations would further strengthen the positive role of sports in Pakistan. "Youth are our future, and their mental and phys-

ical wellbeing must remain our top priority," Gilani said, emphasizing that bringing positive social change through sports is a key part of the federation's vision. United Nations Resident Coordinator Mohammad Yahya described the partnership as a significant step toward promoting youth mental health in Pakistan. He said sports play a vital role in building confidence, unity and positive thinking among young people, adding that the United Nations Pakistan would continue extending full support for youth welfare initiatives. He further noted that openly discussing mental health has become an urgent need of the time, while Pakistan is among the few countries in the world where such a unique programme is being launched. Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana said PFF President Mohsen Gilani is "a Qalandar at heart" and assured full support from Lahore Qalandars for football development initiatives. He highlighted that Lahore Qalandars has already engaged more than 900,000 youngsters through its talent hunt programmes and would continue working with PFF to promote football in the country. Pakistan women's football team captain Maria Khan said football strengthens mental resilience, confidence and self-belief, while United Nations Youth Conference member Maria Martha said that although women face various challenges in sports, games continue to create positive opportunities for the younger generation.

## 'China training Russian troops'

FROM PAGE 01

Ukraine, but the Die Welt report would bolster suspicions that Beijing has offered more support to its Russian allies than publicly disclosed. Chinese troops have also reportedly received secret training in Russia. Die Welt reported that European intelligence sources believe that roughly 600 PLA soldiers spent time at Russian military bases last year learning about armored combat, artillery deployment and air defenses.

## War can go beyond Middle...

FROM PAGE 01

out on February 28. A ceasefire has been in place since April 8. "The American-Zionist enemy... must know that despite the offensive carried out against us using the full capabilities of the world's two most expensive armies, we have not deployed the full power of the Islamic revolution," the Guards said. The nearly 40-day war killed top Iranian leaders including supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, triggering retaliatory missile and drone attacks by Tehran across the region. On Tuesday, Trump offered a deadline of several days for resuming strikes if a deal is not agreed. He had said a day earlier that Gulf Arab leaders asked him to hold off on an attack at the 11th hour. "I'm saying two or three days, maybe Friday, Saturday, Sunday, something, maybe early next week, a limited period of time," he said. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote on X that a "return to war will feature many more surprises." Iran's IRNA News Agency reported on Wednesday that the Pakistani Interior Minister was visiting Tehran again to meet with officials.

## New UAE oil pipeline '50 per...

FROM PAGE 01

The Abu Dhabi Media Office revealed the existence of the new West-East Pipeline project last week, saying Crown Prince Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed directed state-owned oil giant ADNOC to fast-track its construction to double export capacity via the port of Fujairah by 2027. "Today, it's already almost 50 percent complete, and we are accelerating its delivery toward 2027," Sultan Al Jaber said during a live-streamed Atlantic Council event. "Right now, too much of the world's energy still moves through too few choke points. That is exactly why the UAE made the decision more than a decade ago to invest in infrastructure that bypasses the Strait of Hormuz." The existing Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline (AD-COP), which carries up to 1.8 million barrels per day, has proved crucial as the UAE seeks to maximize exports from the Gulf of Oman coast just outside the Strait. Iran, which has attacked vessels to assert control over the Strait, has expanded its definition of the waterway to include the UAE's Gulf of Oman coastline. The US has imposed its own blockade on Iranian ports and attempted an aborted operation to reopen the chokepoint. Meanwhile, the UAE demanded on Wednesday that Iraq "immediately" prevent further attacks from its territory, following an accusation by the Emirates that a drone targeting a nuclear plant was launched from there. The foreign ministry in a statement called on "Iraq to prevent all hostile acts originating from its territory urgently and without conditions," saying there was a "need to address those threats promptly, immediately and responsibly." On Sunday, an unclaimed drone attack struck an electrical generator near the Arab world's only nuclear power plant in Barakah in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, triggering a fire but causing no injuries or radiation leak. Two other drones were intercepted.

## Briefs

## Standing committees are the real strength of ICCI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has said that the Standing Committees are the real arms and backbone of the Chamber as they play a pivotal role in the policy formulation and decision-making aimed at resolving the issues faced by the business community. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting of the Chairmen of the ICCI Standing Committees held at the Chamber House on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by a large number of Chairmen of various Standing Committees, former office-bearers and members of the business community. Addressing the participants, Sardar Tahir Mehmood emphasized the need for regular meetings of the Standing Committees so that the genuine problems and challenges confronting the business community could be properly identified and effectively highlighted before the relevant authorities for timely resolution. He stated that Standing Committees serve as an effective platform for policy recommendations and constructive engagement with government institutions. He added that these committees can play a significant role in promoting ease of doing business, facilitating investment activities and supporting the overall economic prosperity of the country.

The ICCI President said that the Chamber leadership firmly believes in consultative decision-making and values the input of all Standing Committees in shaping future strategies for the development of trade, industry and commerce. He further apprised the participants about the important milestones achieved by the Chamber during the current tenure for the facilitation of the business community and also shared future plans of action aimed at strengthening the private sector and improving the business environment. During the meeting, the Chairmen of Standing Committees presented briefings regarding the performance and activities of their respective committees and highlighted sector-specific challenges along with practical recommendations for improvement. Sardar Tahir Mehmood appreciated the efforts and performance of the top-performing committees and encouraged other committees to further enhance their engagement and performance. He assured them that the Chamber leadership would continue to extend full support and cooperation to all committees for achieving their objectives in an efficient manner.—DNA

## AIB Vice President calls on Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Vice President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Konstantin Limityovskiy, along with Director General Xiaohong Wang, called on Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Wednesday to discuss the ongoing and proposed communication and infrastructure development projects across Pakistan. During the meeting, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan emphasized that partnership and investment with the AIIB were of paramount importance to Pakistan, said a press release. He stated that the government aimed to complete many vital transportation and infrastructure projects within the next two years. He added that the most critical project for Pakistan right now was the Karachi-Hyderabad and Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway which would play a pivotal role in the country's economic development. Aleem Khan assured that the Government of Pakistan would utilize all available resources to ensure its timely completion and aims to complete the project within 2 years.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar welcomed a delegation of senior Bangladeshi civil servants at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. DNA

## PIACL privatization Transaction discussed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Privatisation Commission (PC) Board, in its 252nd meeting held today under the chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Ali, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation, reviewed the progress on the first closing of the privatisation transaction of Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Limited (PIACL). During the meeting, the Financial Adviser briefed the Board on the progress achieved towards the fulfilment of the conditions precedent outlined in the Share Purchase and Subscription Agreement (SPSA), including key regulatory, financial, and transactional requirements necessary for completion of the first closing. The Board expressed satisfaction with the progress made so far and granted the necessary approvals to facilitate the materialisation of the first closing of the transaction. The Board reaffirmed the Government's commitment to advancing the privatisation programme in a transparent, competitive, and professionally managed manner aimed at promoting efficiency, strengthening investor confidence, and supporting sustainable economic reforms.—APP

## Session on drug use prevention in workplace

LAHORE: Drug Advisory Training Hub (DATH), a project of (YOFCAN), launched a new intervention session on Drug Use Prevention in Workplace at Nishat Hotel Lahore. The session was organized to raise awareness about the growing challenges of substance use in professional environments and to promote healthy, safe, and productive workplaces. Consultant, Anti Drugs Narcotics Campaign & Prevention Specialist Syed Zulfikar Hussain was chief guest and highlighted the major risk factors in the workplace. Syed Zulfikar Hussain emphasized that workplaces are important social and professional environments where people spend a major part of their daily lives while providing services in factories, institutions, offices, corporate sectors, and other organizations. He highlighted that the use of drugs and other psychoactive substances negatively affects employees' health, workplace discipline, productivity, and overall performance. He further stated that many individuals unknowingly become involved in the use of soft substances, which gradually impacts their professional effectiveness, decision-making abilities, and mental well-being. Mr. Hussain said that the workplace is one of the key institutions in society, as a significant percentage of adults in that society are employed and participate in some type of work setting.—APP

## US Senate advances resolution to curb Trump's war power

Trump's Republicans have blocked seven previous attempts to advance similar resolutions in the Senate this year. They have also stopped three war powers resolutions by narrow votes in the House this year

WASHINGTON: The U.S. Senate voted on Tuesday to advance a war powers resolution aimed at forcing President Donald Trump to end the war in Iran unless he receives Congressional authorization to continue it. Tuesday's 50-47 vote marks the first time the chamber has advanced the bill, the eighth attempt at doing so since the conflict began in February. Four Republicans joined all but one of the Senate's Democrats in voting to pass the bill. The vote showed that a small but growing number of Republicans are increasingly uneasy

with a war that shows no signs of ending, amid a fragile ceasefire, and are willing to challenge the president, US media reports highlighted. "This president is like a toddler playing with a loaded gun," Democratic Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer was quoted as saying before the vote. "If there was ever a time to support our war powers resolution to withdraw troops from hostilities with Iran, it's now," he added. The result was also represented success for lawmakers who have been arguing that Congress, not the president, should have

the power to send troops to war, as spelled out in the US Constitution, it was pointed out. However, it was only a procedural vote, and the resolution faces steep hurdles if it is ever to go into effect. Three Republicans were absent during the vote on Tuesday, and their votes would be enough to defeat the measure if they maintain their stance in favour of the war. But even if the resolution is eventually passed by a vote of the 100-member Senate, it must also pass the Republican-led House of Representatives and garner two-thirds majori-

ties in both the House and Senate to survive an expected Trump veto. Trump's Republicans have blocked seven previous attempts to advance similar resolutions in the Senate this year. They have also stopped three war powers resolutions by narrow votes in the House this year. Yet, the vote on Tuesday underscores growing pressure on the president, as the war on Iran, launched by the US and Israel in late February, continues to wreak havoc on the global energy market and the cost of living at home.—DNA

## Pakistani gemstones shine at Nanjing expo

The event hopes to attract key industry players, including major exhibitors from China, and build on the momentum generated at exhibitions like the CIMGE in Nanjing

NANJING: As the 2026 China (Nanjing) International Mineral Gemstone & Fossil Expo (CIMGE) was held at the Nanjing International Exhibition Center (NIEC), a growing contingent of Pakistani exhibitors seized the opportunity to showcase their country's geological treasures to one of the world's most dynamic markets. The expo, which opened its doors to the general public, offered a glimpse into Pakistan's vast and largely untapped mineral wealth, according to a China Economic Net's report. The exhibition drew participants from over 50 countries and regions including Pakistan, Peru, the United States, and Switzerland, with international exhibitors accounting for more than 25 percent of the total. Covering 65,000 square meters, the expo was divided into dedicated sections for domestic and international mineral crystals, fossils and meteorites, jewelry, and educational displays. For exhibitors, China's mature and rapidly expanding gemstone market offers an opportunity to connect with serious buyers and collectors. At least ten Pakistani companies took part and brought mineral specimens and gems including emeralds, tourmalines, topaz, morganite, quartz, aquamarine and crystals from Gilgit Baltistan, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. For many, the expo represents far more than just a sales opportunity. Liaqat from Pakistan Astor Gems and Minerals described China as a very large and vibrant market, noting that Chinese collectors are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about mineral specimen and gemstones and are gradually embracing gemstones as everyday wearable items. The growing participation of Pakistani exhibitors at China's premier gemstone fairs reflects a broader trend of deepening mineral cooperation between the two countries. China customs data shows Pakistan's exports of unworked precious and semi-precious stones (HS Code 71031000) to China surged about 145.7% year-on-year to \$783,890 in the first four months of this year. This trade momentum is being matched by high-level commitment. Earlier this year, Pakistani Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal addressed the China-Pakistan Mineral Cooperation Forum, stating that the two countries were entering a decisive new phase of economic partnership by placing mineral development at the centre of CPEC 2.0 aimed at transforming connectivity into productivity, exports and sustainable growth. Pakistan is endowed with globally rare and high-quality gemstone resources, with a total national reserve valued at an estimated 450 billion dollars. The country hosts around 92 known minerals, with 52 currently under extraction, nearly 5,000 operational mines and annual production of about 68.5 million metric tons. Despite this scale, mineral exports remained modest, contributing only 2-3 percent to GDP.—APP

## Balochistan Police intensify crackdown on outlaws

QUETTA: The Balochistan Police have intensified their campaign to safeguard lives and property, aiming to provide citizens with a peaceful and crime-free environment. The operation, which spans all seven ranges of the province including Quetta, targets proclaimed offenders, fugitives and other wanted criminals. According to a press release issued by the police spokesperson here Wednesday, Inspector General of Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir directed the force to sustain this special drive. Over the past three weeks, police teams arrested 43 proclaimed offenders, 288 fugitives, and 556 suspects wanted in various crimes. Swift action against kidnappers also resulted in the safe recovery of thirteen abducted individuals. Police seized five stolen vehicles, fifteen motorcycles, and six mobile phones. Violations of Section 144 led to the impoundment of nine vehicles, while twenty-eight motorcycles were confiscated under Section 550. The anti-narcotics campaign has also shown major success. Ninety-four drug dealers were arrested, and large quantities of narcotics were recovered, including 430 kilograms of cannabis, 203 kilograms of crystal meth, 739 kilograms of dried hemp, 23 kilograms of opium, and 210 kilograms of heroin. Authorities also confiscated alcohol in various forms, including beer cans, bottles, and homemade liquor. Other operations led to the seizure of 7,000 liters of smuggled diesel, the removal of tinted glass from 1,755 vehicles, and the confiscation of gutka, Iranian cigarettes, and Iranian currency amounting to 7.88 billion rupees. It was emphasized that measures were being taken to prevent criminals from relocating between districts.—APP

## SC upholds death sentence

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday ruled that where direct eyewitness testimony, injured witness evidence, medical findings and forensic reports consistently establish guilt in a murder case, failure to conclusively prove motive alone was not sufficient legal ground to commute a death sentence to life imprisonment. The observation was made in a detailed judgment issued in Jail Petition No. 178 of 2025 by a three-member bench comprising Justice, Justice and Justice. The apex court upheld the May 22, 2025 verdict of the Multan Bench, which had maintained the convictions and sentences awarded to convict Khuda Bakhsh by the trial court. According to the judgment, the case arose from FIR No. 850/2019 registered at City Shujaabad Police Station, Multan district. The prosecution alleged that during the night between October 14 and 15, 2019, the convict opened fire inside his house with a 30 bore pistol, killing his son Muhammad Imran, daughter Fauzia Bibi and minor grandson Muhammad Madni, while injuring another son, Muhammad Rizwan. The Supreme Court observed that the prosecution case was based on direct ocular evidence fully corroborated by the testimony of the injured witness, medical reports and the forensic report.—APP

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**Briefs**

**'Ilan Omar's role in 'Somali fraud' scandal should be probed'**

DNA

CHICAGO: Aimee Bock, the founder of a Minnesota nonprofit convicted in a multimillion-dollar fraud involving dozens of Somali suspects, has told Arab News that federal investigators should investigate Congresswoman Ilhan Omar's role. The Minnesota Democrat's 5th District has the largest concentration of Somali Americans and much of the fraud convictions. Evidence shows that fraudsters, mostly of Somali heritage, created shell companies and fake sites, and forged delivery counts of food provided to hundreds of thousands of children and families in order to boost reimbursements they received from the Minnesota Department of Education. Bock, executive director of Feeding Our Future, which processed the payments, said she warned and provided evidence of the fraud to the MDE and state officials, but was ignored and later prosecuted as a "scapegoat." She told Arab News: "The fact remains that there were a lot of politicians who were alerted and should've been aware. I reported it to two state agencies. They should've escalated it to others. If they didn't, why?"

**Residents of Lithuania's capital told to shelter**

VILNIUS: Residents of Vilnius were told to take shelter and Lithuania's president and prime minister were taken to safe locations on Wednesday because of an alarm over drone activity near the border with Belarus, underlining jitters on NATO's eastern fringe over incursions related to Russia's war with Ukraine. An emergency announcement from the military told people in the Vilnius region to "immediately head to a shelter or a safe place." The alert, which lasted for about an hour, also led to the closure of the airspace over Vilnius Airport. President Gitanas Nausėda and Prime Minister Inga Štikonienė were taken to shelters, and there was also an evacuation order at Lithuania's parliament, the Seimas, the BNS news agency reported. It was the first major alert that sent residents and political leaders in a European Union and NATO capital rushing to shelters since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Lithuania, a member of NATO and the European Union, borders Russia-allyed Belarus to the east and Russia's Kaliningrad exclave to the west. Wednesday's alert came after the military said it detected drone activity in Belarus, but no drones were sighted over Lithuania. - APP

# President Asif Zardari receives Prince Rahim Aga Khan V

This is Prince Rahim Aga Khan's first visit to Pakistan since assuming leadership of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community as the 50th Imam following the passing of his father, His Late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, in February 2025

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari today received His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan V upon his arrival at Noor Khan Airbase on an official visit to Pakistan. First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari accompanied the President. This is Prince Rahim Aga Khan's first visit to Pakistan since assuming leadership of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community as the 50th Imam following the passing of his father, His Late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, in February 2025. Upon arrival at Aawan-e-Sadr, a tri-services guard of honour comprising contingents of the Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Air Force was presented to the visiting dignitary. President Asif Ali Zardari, First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari and Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairman PPP, held a meeting with Prince Rahim Aga Khan V, followed by delegation-level talks. The President also hosted a banquet in his honour, which was attended among others by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Mr Ishaq Dar, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir COAS & CDF, Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, federal ministers, members of parliament and members of the diplomatic community. The President appreciated the Aga Khan De-



velopment Network's longstanding contributions to Pakistan in healthcare, education, community development, climate

resilience and heritage conservation. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening cooperation

with AKDN for the welfare and development of vulnerable communities. The President recalled the enduring association of late Prince Karim Aga Khan IV with Pakistan and appreciated the historic contributions of the Aga Khan family to the country. Prince Rahim Aga Khan thanked the President for the warm welcome and reaffirmed AKDN's continued commitment to supporting development and humanitarian initiatives in Pakistan. Prince Rahim's last visit to Pakistan was in 2024, when the President conferred upon him the Nishan-e-Pakistan, the nation's highest civilian award, in recognition of Aga Khan family's longstanding contributions to Pakistan. Mr Sultan Ali Allana, Director Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development & Head of Financial Services AKDN; Mr Shafiq Sachedina, Head of Department of Jamati Institutions; Mr Nizar Noor Mohammed Mewawala, President Ismaili Council for Pakistan and Mr Akbar Ladak, Vice President Ismaili Council for Pakistan, were part of the delegation. Chairman PPP, and former Foreign Minister, Mr Bilawal Bhutto Zardari; First Lady, Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari; Senator Sherry Rehman, Senator Saleem Mandviwala, Mr Naveed Qamar, MNA, Dr Asim Hussain and Foreign Secretary also attended the meeting.

## Israeli war plan sought to install Ahmadinejad in Iran



NEWS DESK

DUBAI: In the early stages of the US-Israeli conflict with Iran, officials explored a plan to reinstall former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, according to US sources quoted by the New York Times. The proposal, developed by the Israeli's, included a high-risk strike intended to free Ahmadinejad from house arrest in Tehran,

as well as the use of Kurdish forces and the bombing of energy infrastructure to force regime collapse. Ahmadinejad, who served as Iran's president from 2005 to 2013, built his reputation on deeply adversarial positions toward both Israel and the United States. He strongly supported Iran's nuclear ambitions and was widely criticized for authoritarian policies and inflammatory rhetoric during his time in office. Although he later fell out with Iran's ruling establishment - clashing with senior leaders, facing political restrictions, and eventually being placed under house arrest. US President Donald Trump had indicated that a successor emerging from within Iran would be the preferred outcome. According to the Times, Trump favoured an outcome similar to the successful removal of Maduro in Venezuela. However, the choice if Ahmadinejad reportedly surprised many within Washington including those within Trump's circle. Details surrounding his involvement remain unclear with US officials saying Ahmadinejad had been consulted about the plan, though the extent of his cooperation is not fully known.

## Pak slams drone strike on UAE's Barakah nuclear plant

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has strongly condemned the drone attack at Barakah power plant in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), stressing that Islamab stands in "complete solidarity" with the Emirati government and people. "The inviolability of civilian nuclear infrastructure is a well-established international norm and must be upheld without exception," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council which met in emergency on the Middle East situation at the request of Bahrain, following a reported drone strike on May 17 near the plant. According to UN, the attack resulted in a localized fire and while emergency diesel gen-

erators were briefly needed, off-site power has now been restored. In this regard, the Pakistani envoy also condemned in "strongest possible terms" the drone attacks against Saudi Arabia, which, he said, appeared to be an attempt to undermine regional peace and stability. Pakistan, he said, stands in solidarity with Saudi Arabia and reaffirms its full and unwavering support for the Kingdom's security, peace and prosperity. "Any and all targeting of nuclear facilities constitute a grave violation of international law," Ambassador Asim Ahmad added. Attacks against nuclear facilities pose a grave danger to the safety of populations in the region, he warned, and as a neighbouring country, Pakistan remains seriously concerned about this dangerous trend. - APP

## DG ISPR interacts with VCs, faculty members

The participants further appreciated ISPR's initiative of bringing university leadership and academia together on a unified platform to improve coordination and understanding on issues of national importance

RAWALPINDI: A special interactive session featuring the Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) was held as part of the National Security and Strategic Leadership Workshop 2026, bringing together vice chancellors and senior faculty members from universities across the country. The workshop was attended by vice chancellors, deans, registrars, and senior teachers from over 200 universities nationwide. Participants from Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Muzaffarabad, Multan, and Quetta also joined the event online. During the engagement, the DG ISPR highlighted issues related to Pakistan's internal security environment, particularly focusing on emerging strategic and security challenges confronting the country. Participants acknowledged the role of the Pakistan Armed Forces in safeguarding national defence, stability, and security. - APP

## Pakistan plans major DISCO reforms to attract private investment



ISLAMABAD: The Privatisation Commission will actively engage with potential investors and key power sector stakeholders to overhaul the existing tariff and operational framework of electricity distribution companies (DISCOs) in a bid to accelerate private sector participation in Pakistan's power supply business. According to Muhammad Ali, Advisor to the Prime Minister/ Chairman, Privatisation Commission of Pakistan the proposed reforms will

focus on refining the current DISCO tariff structure, MYT regime, business models, and the framework for competitive power suppliers. "The proposed reforms aim to create a performance and efficiency-based return regime while enabling private sector buyers to leverage DISCO infrastructure and customer base for additional business opportunities," he said. He added that the planned measures are expected to facilitate faster and more effective private sector participation in the country's power distribution sector, while also improving efficiency, reducing losses, and enhancing service delivery. The move comes as the government intensifies efforts to restructure the energy sector and attract investment through privatisation and market-driven reforms aimed at improving the financial sustainability of power distribution companies. - DNA

# Pakistan-China friendship rooted in shared values: Tarar


Tarar said it was a real pleasure for him to host the event at the Pak-China Friendship Centre as Pakistan and China began celebrations commemorating 75 years of diplomatic relations

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has said that Pakistan and China shared an unbreakable bond rooted in history, shared values and strong people-to-people connections as celebrations marking 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries commenced at the Pak-China Friendship Centre. Addressing the "Pakistan-China Cultural Evening, Celebrating 75 Years of Enduring Friendship, Shared Values, and a Bright Future" held here, the minister extended greetings in Chinese by saying "da jia hao". Tarar said it was a real pleasure for him to host the event at the Pak-China Friendship Centre as Pakistan and China began celebrations commemorating 75 years of diplomatic relations. He said the Pakistan-China friendship had been passed down through generations and remained deeply cherished by the people of Pakistan. "It is something we hold

very dear, something which is very close to our hearts, and something which has stood the test of time," he remarked. Recalling a personal family memory, the minister said his mother had told him that as a young schoolgirl in Islamabad, she was among the children who welcomed former Chinese premier Zhou Enlai during his visit to Pakistan while waving the flags of both countries. He said generations of Pakistanis had grown up hearing stories of friendship between the two nations and would continue narrating those stories to future generations because Pakistan and China shared mountains, rivers, and an enduring relationship. Referring to the upcoming visit to China alongside Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Tarar said the completion of 75 years of diplomatic ties represented a historic milestone and reflected the ever-growing friendship between the two countries. The minister paid tribute to children from both Pakistan and China, who performed during the cultural evening and described their performances as heart-touching and remarkable. He also appreciated the efforts of the organizers, including the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting team, Director General of the External Publicity Wing, Federal Secretary Information and Broadcasting Ashfaq Ahmed Khalil and their teams for arranging the event on short notice. Tarar said Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal had always been a strong advocate of Pakistan-China friendship and played a key role during the launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) when Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Islamabad along with former prime minister Nawaz Sharif.





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