



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے محمد ﷺ نے کہا کہ تم لوگوں کو مالک نے خریدی، انہیں انہیں شہاب نے، انہیں سعید بن مسیب نے اور انہیں ابو ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ سے کر سوا اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا پہلوان وہ نہیں ہے جو شمشیر لڑنے میں غالب ہو جائے بلکہ اصلی پہلوان تو وہ ہے جو غصہ کی حالت میں اپنے آپ پر قابو پائے۔ یہ قیامت ہو جائے۔ (بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6114)
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Trump claims 'fantastic deals' with Xi, but proof is scarce

US President Donald Trump said he had made "fantastic trade deals" and settled "a lot of different problems" in his meetings with China's Xi Jinping this week, but hours after the summit ended on Friday details on exact agreements remained scarce.



Iran: US willing to continue talks, open to China's help

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Friday he had "received messages" from the United States saying it is willing to continue talks, and that he was open to any support, including from China. "We received messages again from the Americans saying that they are willing to continue the talks and continue the interaction," Araghchi told reporters in the Indian capital.

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Called on

ISLAMABAD: A Chinese business delegation of IBI Beijing United Technology called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday.



Photo: PID

PM welcomes establishment of Digital Economy Headquarters in Pakistan by IBI Group

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday appreciated IBI Group's decision to establish its Pakistan Digital Economy Headquarters in Pakistan and expressed satisfaction at the expanding business to business (B2B) cooperation between Pakistan and China. He was talking to a high-level 11-member Chinese business delegation led by Qian

Xiaojun, Founder, President and Controlling Shareholder of IBI Beijing United Technology which called on him at the Prime Minister's House. While welcoming the delegation to Pakistan, the prime minister said that Pakistan and China enjoyed historic ties and the two countries were All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners. He lauded the remarkable progress made by China under

the visionary leadership of President Xi Jinping and said that he was looking forward to his visit to China later this month. He said it was particularly encouraging that IBI would promote digital economy cooperation, investment facilitation and industrial collaboration. Expressing confidence in Pakistan's economy, Qian Xiaojun said IBI hoped to help build digital backbone for digital transformation of Pakistan's economy.

He said establishment of IBI's Digital Economy Headquarters in Pakistan would be a command centre for this transformation and shall provide massive opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Pakistan by offering a gateway for them to a vast Chinese market. The delegation was visiting Pakistan as a follow up to the Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference held in Beijing

in September 2025 during the Prime Minister's visit. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Federal Minister for Investment, Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister for Commerce, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Federal Minister for IT & Telecom, Ali Pervez Malik, Federal Minister for Petroleum, Haroon Akhtar, SAPM Industries & Production, SAPM Tariq Fatemi, and other senior officials were also present during the meeting.

Bilawal launches 11 health projects in Quetta, vows free treatment for all

News Desk

QUETTA: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday inaugurated 11 health department projects in Quetta, declaring that free medical treatment is the right of every Pakistani, particularly the people of Balochistan. Addressing the inauguration ceremony and party workers, Bilawal said a state where only the wealthy can access healthcare is unacceptable. "PPP's politics is rooted in serving



the common man," he said, praising the performance of Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti's team for delivering beyond expectations within two years.

Among the key projects launched was Balochistan's first air ambulance service and its first paperless trauma centre, which Chief Minister Bugti announced would be named after Shaheed Benazir Bhutto. Chief Minister Bugti called on Friday "a day of revolution" for Balochistan's health sector, saying the province's people had never imagined that modern medical facilities would reach their doorsteps. He also announced the upcoming launch of the Peoples Green Bus Service in major cities of the province.

Interior Minister's high-level huddle with U. S. officials signals renewed momentum in bilateral ties

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a significant diplomatic engagement, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with U. S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs S. Paul Kapur on Friday to review the trajectory of Pakistan-U. S. relations, regional security challenges, and avenues for deeper cooperation. The meeting, attended by Acting U. S. Ambassador Natalie Baker, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, and senior officials, unfolded against the backdrop of heightened geopolitical shifts in the Middle East and renewed emphasis on counterter-

rorism coordination. In his remarks, Naqvi underlined that Pakistan-U. S. relations had strengthened during the tenure of Donald Trump, adding that bilateral ties were anchored in "mutual trust, shared objectives and robust cooperation." He highlighted Islamabad's commitment to facilitating U. S. interests in the region, particularly in areas of counterterrorism and counternarcotics. A key assurance came when Naqvi reaffirmed foolproof security measures for American companies working on the Reko Diq Project, one of the largest foreign investment ventures in Pakistan. Sources present at the meeting said the discussion

also touched upon operational frameworks to ensure long-term investor confidence. Pushing for stronger people-to-people connectivity, the interior minister reiterated Pakistan's desire for an early resumption of direct flights between Pakistan and the United States—an issue long on the bilateral agenda. Officials believe the revival of direct air links would boost business, academic exchange, and diaspora engagement. The evolving Middle East conflict also featured prominently during the dialogue. Naqvi expressed the hope for a "lasting and peaceful settlement", stressing the need for collective global diplomacy to stem regional volatility.

Drug network probe widens in Anmol alias Pinky case

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Drug trafficking cases registered against Anmol alias Pinky have increased, prompting police to expand the scope of investigation into her alleged network and review previous cases, officials said on Friday. According to police officials, a 2024 case registered at the Wahdat Colony police station in Lahore has brought fresh developments in the probe. The case involves the accused Sabra Bibi, from whom 20 grams of cocaine were recovered. The FIR states that during interrogation, Sabra Bibi allegedly disclosed she obtained the drugs from Anmol in Karachi. Following this statement, investigators have begun reviewing older cases and records linked to the accused across different police stations. Police said this is now the fourth case being examined as part of the wider investigation into the alleged drug supply network. Officials said Anmol was arrested on May 12 in Karachi's Garden area during a joint operation by police and a federal agency. Police records show she has been nominated in multiple cases and was previously arrested in 2018 before being released on bail. Investigators are now consolidating evidence from different jurisdictions as the probe continues.

DPM Dar says 11 Pakistanis detained by US authorities return home safely



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar announced that 11 Pakistani nationals who were aboard a plane taken into custody by US authorities have safely returned home. In a statement posted on X, Ishaq Dar said that the repatriation of 11 Pakistanis and 20 Iranian citizens had been successfully completed. He stated that the passengers aboard the aircraft detained by US authorities were returned via Pakistan, adding that all Pakistani and

Iranian nationals had arrived home safely and in good health. The deputy prime minister said the departure arrangements for the Pakistani and Iranian citizens were completed with the cooperation of Singapore. After reaching Bangkok from Singapore, a special flight departed for Islamabad. Ishaq Dar added that Iranian citizens were also facilitated in returning to their homeland through Pakistan. He thanked the government and foreign minister of Singapore for their support.

Talal Chaudhry rejects 'misleading propaganda' about PTI founder's health



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Interior Senator Talal Chaudhry has strongly rejected what he described as "misleading and baseless propaganda" regarding the health of the PTI founder, saying the claims circulating on social media are "contrary to verified medical facts." In a detailed statement posted on his social media platform X, Senator Chaudhry wrote "The misleading prop-

aganda about the PTI founder's health is completely against the facts. A senior medical board comprising specialists — including eye specialists, cardiologists, ENT experts, dental surgeons, and others — examines him regularly. All treatment is conducted strictly under international medical standards." He further stated that the PTI founder underwent multiple eye treatments at PIMS Islamabad under the supervision of specialists, and after treatment, his vision was reported as 6/6, confirming that the procedure was successful. Senator Chaudhry noted that even the Supreme Court of Pakistan had expressed satisfaction with the comprehensive medical report submitted by the jail superintendent.

Bridge collapse in Kandhkot kills three workers



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A bridge under construction on the Nasir canal in Kandhkot collapsed suddenly, killing three workers and injuring several others, officials and local sources said on Friday. Several workers were buried under the debris after the structure gave way while construction work was underway. The bodies of three people were recovered, while injured

workers were shifted to a nearby hospital. Residents took part in rescue efforts before official teams arrived. According to initial reports, work was ongoing at the site when the bridge collapsed. The exact cause of the incident is not yet known. An emergency was declared in the area, and police and local administration were called to the scene to assist rescue operations.

AJK PM briefs Bilawal Bhutto on Kashmir political climate and development progress

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore at Zardari House hailed Ajk government uplift of masses.

Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz

Rathore called on PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and briefed Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on the political situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore also briefed Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on the development works of the people's government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan People's Party made you the Prime Minister to fulfill the public promises in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's conversation with Faisal Rathore.

Our promises made to the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir are a trust and we do not betray the trust, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's

conversation with Prime Minister AJK Raja Faisal Rathore hailed PPP government progress.

The promises made to the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Muslim should be fulfilled immediately and preparations for the next elections should be made, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari instructed.



PPP Leader Hails New Education Package for Azad Kashmir Revolution



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin stated that the new education package will revolutionize education in the region, enabling students to pursue higher education locally. The package includes upgrading institutions and ensuring full staffing, continuing the PPP's tradition of providing key services like health and education initiatives. He highlighted the PPP's past achievements, such as upgrading hospitals, establishing five universities, three medical colleges, and a women's university, allowing local medical education. Yasin aims to transform Azad Kashmir into a premier educational hub, offering superior opportunities by developing upgraded institutions into models. He emphasized that an educated Kashmir is vital for development and enlightenment, enabling citizens to understand their rights, a concept he credits to PPP founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Justice Project Pakistan Honored with Tamgha-e-Imtiaz



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Justice Project Pakistan (JPP), founded in 2009 by Sarah Belal after receiving a letter from a death row inmate, has dedicated nearly two decades to assisting the most vulnerable within Pakistan's justice system, including those facing execution, torture, indefinite imprisonment, and Pakistanis held abroad without due process. JPP utilizes strategic litigation, investigation, public advocacy, and storytelling to challenge prevailing punitive measures. Their efforts have led to significant, albeit quiet, shifts: Pakistan has not carried out an execution since December 2019, safeguards expanded with a Supreme Court ruling banning the execution of individuals with severe mental illness, and the nation passed its first law criminalizing custodial torture. Internationally, JPP's litigation affirmed that due process applies to Pakistani citizens detained abroad, leading to the return of hundreds. Sarah Belal, JPP's Executive Director, was recently conferred the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz 2026 for Excellence in Human Rights (Law). Belal dedicated the award to the prisoners, families, and JPP team who maintained trust when the system had failed. Despite these successes, Pakistan's criminal justice system still struggles with deep issues like torture and a vast death row population. JPP remains committed to their foundational principle: ensuring the law practically protects those most at risk.

PhD Scholar Engineers Low-Cost Carbon Nitride Nanosheets for Ultra-Sensitive Toxin Detection

Iram Asim

MULTAN: PhD scholar Kiran Lal successfully defended his dissertation, "Computational Study of Carbon Nitride Nanosheets as Effective Electrochemical Sensors," at Women University Multan's Chemistry Department. Lal's research utilized modern computational modeling to study carbon nitride nanosheets, aiming to develop advanced, cost-effective, fast, and sensitive electrochemical sensors for detecting toxic substances in environmental and medical fields. He stated that the timely detection of environmental pollution and hazardous chemicals is a critical modern challenge, and his developed model offers less expensive technology for immediate identification of harmful substances in industrial waste, contaminated water, and medical diagnostics, significantly furthering environmental monitoring and human health protection. Vice Chancellor Dr. Uzma Qureshi praised the research as a significant scientific contribution and a positive step toward developing environmental-friendly, low-cost technology, highlighting the university's commitment to promoting modern scientific research through capable young scholars.



Sacrificial animals

KOHAT: A vehicle carries sacrificial animals towards cattle market ahead of Eid Al-Adha.



Photo: Online

AJK election showdown: PML-N ticket hurdle threatens unity ahead of May 20 deadline

Spokesman Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Political tension is high in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) as the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), led by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, nears the finalization of its general election ticket distribution across AJK constituencies, covering areas like Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Kotli, Mirpur, and Muhajireen seats.

The list has been forwarded for Sharif's final approval, with an official announcement anticipated around May 20, 2026. Ticket allocation presents a major challenge for PML-N, as six to seven strong contenders vie for each seat, many asserting their high chances based on personal, communal, and public support.



A significant internal issue is the threat from several hopefuls who have declared they will run as independents if denied a PML-N ticket, refusing to join other parties, which concerns the central leadership.

During candidate interviews, the party reviewed factors like political standing, local influence, finances,

public relations, and past performance.

While some candidates guaranteed victory if awarded the ticket, others argued for prioritizing established candidates with proven winnability over mere personal assurances. A key internal debate revolves around favoring long-standing ideological

workers versus fielding influential "electables" who guarantee electoral success.

Political observers note that in AJK politics, communalism, local factionalism, and personal vote banks are decisive, meaning poor ticket adjustments could severely damage the party. Nawaz Sharif has consistently stressed the need for candidates who can enhance the party's reputation and secure public acceptance.

Media reports suggest the leadership prioritizes strong, dynamic, and electable candidates to realistically pursue government formation in AJK. Despite internal conflicts, PML-N remains hopeful of forming special committees post-announcement to appease disgruntled leaders and mobilize the party structure.

US, China need to up mutual partnership

President Donald Trump's recent visit to China was far more than a routine diplomatic engagement. It came at a time when the world is facing political uncertainty, economic instability, regional conflicts, and a rapidly shifting global balance of power. The visit reopened important discussions about the future of U.S.-China relations and the broader direction of international politics in the twenty-first century.

This was President Trump's second visit to China. His first official visit took place in 2017 during his earlier term in office and was widely viewed as a major diplomatic development. China extended exceptional diplomatic warmth, while both countries discussed trade, economic cooperation, and regional stability. However, the years that followed witnessed trade wars, tariff disputes, technological rivalry, and increasing strategic mistrust between Washington and Beijing.

Against this backdrop, Trump's

second visit carried extraordinary significance. It represented not merely a diplomatic meeting between two world powers, but also an opportunity to reassess the future of global politics at a time when many fear deeper polarization and confrontation.

Donald Trump is known for his assertive political style and his "America First" doctrine. During his presidency, relations between the United States and China experienced serious tensions over trade, technology, and geopolitical influence. Washington increasingly viewed China's rapid economic rise as a challenge to American global dominance, while Beijing continued expanding its influence through long-term economic planning and diplomatic engagement.

Yet perhaps the most important aspect of this visit lies in the symbolic message represented by China itself. Throughout its modern rise, China has largely focused on economic development, infrastructure, trade, and strategic patience rather than military expansion. Its leadership has consistently

emphasized stability, connectivity, and economic partnerships instead of prolonged wars and foreign occupations.

This distinction becomes especially significant when compared with modern American history, much of which has been shaped by military interventions and conflicts across different regions of the world. In this sense, President Trump visited not merely another great power, but a country whose political philosophy repeatedly conveys an important lesson: wars rarely solve problems; they often create deeper crises.

If American leadership can absorb this lesson, its impact could extend far beyond U.S.-China relations. From Ukraine to the Middle East, the modern world continues to suffer from destructive wars, humanitarian disasters, and economic uncertainty. Humanity today needs dialogue,

cooperation, trade, and mutual respect far more than confrontation and military escalation.

In this broader context, Pakistan's historic role deserves special recognition. Diplomatic history clearly records that Pakistan served as the crucial bridge between the United States and China during the Cold War era. In 1971, when direct communication between Washington and Beijing was nearly nonexistent, Pakistan facilitated the historic opening between the two powers. It was through Pakistan that U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger secretly traveled to China, paving the way for President Richard Nixon's historic visit to Beijing.

That diplomatic breakthrough transformed global politics and remains one of Pakistan's most significant contributions to international diplomacy. Even

today, Pakistan's role in bringing the United States and China closer together is remembered with respect in diplomatic circles.

The visit also carried important implications for South Asia. Pakistan, which enjoys deep strategic relations with China while maintaining diplomatic ties with the United States, closely observes developments between the two global powers. Stability in U.S.-China relations directly affects regional security, economic opportunities, and diplomatic alignments across Asia.

At the same time, Pakistan's current political and military leadership has received growing international attention for its diplomatic engagement and balanced regional approach. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir have projected Pakistan's position on regional peace and stability with increasing clarity and confidence. Their efforts have been acknowledged internationally, while President Donald Trump

has also appreciated Pakistan's constructive role and particularly recognized the leadership qualities of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir regarding regional security and stability.

Recent efforts aimed at reducing tensions between Iran and the United States have further reinforced a vital truth: lasting solutions emerge through diplomacy and dialogue rather than confrontation and war.

History repeatedly demonstrates that great leadership is defined not only by strength, but by wisdom, patience, and the ability to choose peace over conflict when humanity's future is at stake.

Nevertheless, the doors of hope must always remain open. Leaders can evolve through experience and changing realities. If President Trump, through this second visit to China, comes to recognize that wars exhaust nations while peace, trade, cooperation, and mutual respect strengthen them, then this visit may ultimately prove beneficial not only for the United States and China, but for the world at large.



Analysis

Sardar Abdul Khaliq Wasi



SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:30 am
Zohr 12:04 pm
Asr 4:58 pm
Maghrib 7:02 pm
Isha 8:39 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

**DG EPA Punjab
Dr. Imran
Hamid Sheikh
Honored
with Sitara-
e-Imtiaz for
Environmental
Excellence**

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Former Deputy Commissioner Attock and current Director General of the Environment Protection Agency Punjab, Dr. Imran Hamid Sheikh, has been awarded the Sitara-e-Imtiaz by Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan in recognition of his outstanding services in environmental protection, smog control, and eco-friendly initiatives.

As Director General of the Environment Protection Agency Punjab, Dr. Imran Hamid Sheikh rendered remarkable services for environmental conservation, reduction of air pollution, and effective control of smog. He introduced modern technology within the Environment Department, making the eco-friendly system more effective, and took practical measures to ensure implementation of environmental laws across the province.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Senior Minister Maryam Aurangzeb also appreciated the services of Dr. Imran Hamid Sheikh, describing his tireless efforts, professional capabilities, and environment-friendly policies as commendable.

Political, social, and public circles of Attock expressed heartfelt happiness over Dr. Imran Hamid Sheikh receiving the Sitara-e-Imtiaz and congratulated him, stating that this honor is also a matter of pride for the district of Attock.

Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif urges strengthening of family bonds on International Day of Families

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, in her message on

the International Day of Families, urged people to renew their commitment to love, respect and strong family ties, stating that family is the greatest source of



strength and happiness.

She said the objective of observing the International Day of Families was to highlight the importance of family in society and promote awareness regarding the value of family life. "Family is not just a word, but another name for love, sincerity and true companionship," she said.

The chief minister prayed that every

family may always remain safe and united and that mutual love and affection continue to flourish. She termed family the first institution of learning and the foundation of moral values, adding that life's challenges become easier when families stand together.

Highlighting the Punjab government's welfare measures, the chief minister said assistance had been extended to four

million families through the Ramadan Nigehban Package during Ramadan, while deserving families received aid at their doorsteps.

She further stated that financial assistance of Rs10,000 each had been provided to millions of families during Ramadan, while more than 1.4 million families had been facilitated through ration cards.

Recognition

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari confers Hilal e Imtiaz on Global CEO of Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani during the investiture ceremony held at Aiwan e Sadr.



Photo: PID

HEC appoints Rector NUST as National Chair to spearhead Pakistan's AI and Robotics transformation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: At a time when Artificial Intelligence and Robotics are giving major impetus to the world economies, industries, security paradigms and governance systems, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, in a landmark development, has appointed Rector NUST Dr Muhammad Zahid Latif as the National Chair on Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, entrusting NUST with spearheading a strategic national initiative in two of the world's most transformative domains.

Based at NUST Islamabad campus, the National Chair, together with a panel of experts, will serve as a premier national platform for policy direction, strategic alignment, governance structures, and comprehensive assessment of the national AI and Robotics ecosystem, particularly in relation to HEC-supported national



centres, including the National Centre of Artificial Intelligence (NCAI) and the National Centre of Robotics and Automation (NCRA).

Punjab Governor Honors Heroic Martyr Muhammad Liaqat Ali Shaheed; Promises Education Aid

Raza Naqvi

Governor of Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, visited the family of Muhammad Liaqat Ali Shaheed in Mankor village, Tehsil Jand, who was martyred while preventing a suicide attack. The Governor extended condolences and prayed for the martyr's elevated status, accompanied by local dignitaries.

He announced that the government would cover all educational expenses for the martyr's son and promised to advocate for the regularization of the martyr's brother, who has worked on daily wages for 15 years.

Local residents requested that the Khushhal Garh Check Post be renamed in honor of Muhammad Liaqat Ali Shaheed, to which the Governor agreed to strongly recommend the name "Liaqat Shaheed Check Post Mankor" to the Punjab Government. The Governor lauded the martyr's supreme sacrifice, stating he saved the check post and hundreds of lives, thwarting terrorist designs and bringing pride to Attock district, known for its courageous people.

He also mentioned recommending a civil award and expressed gratitude for the swift approval of the Tamgha-e-Shujaat for Muhammad Liaqat Ali Shaheed by the government, President, Prime Minister, and Syed Asim Munir—an unprecedentedly fast recognition.

The Governor emphasized that this award honors both the martyr and the brave people of Attock, underscoring that the sacrifices of security forces and the nation's brave stand as the bedrock of the country's strength.

Citizen Society launches campaign against professional beggars



Anwar Chohan

KHARIAN: The Department of Social Welfare & Community Development, Kharian Tehsil, in collaboration with Citizen Society Kharian, organized an awareness seminar and walk at the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, Kharian, regarding the issue of professional begging.

During the event, the Assistant Director Community Development Kharian and the Citizen Society Kharian team urged participants to discourage professional beggars. Speakers highlighted the importance of supporting government initiatives aimed at eliminating begging and appealed to citizens to promptly report such matters to the relevant authorities.

Special attention was also given to the role of the Child Protection Bureau in safeguarding children. The speakers emphasized that the primary objective of this campaign is to promote dignified and lawful employment opportunities.

Participants appreciated the government initiative and pledged their full cooperation in the campaign. Informational pamphlets were also distributed to raise public awareness.

Friendship Business Group Chairman Honors Key Figures in Grand Social Gathering

Anwar Chohan

GUJRAT: Chairman of the Friendship Business Group, Chaudhry Nadeem Manzoor Begah, hosted a grand dinner in honor of the Chairman of the University of Southern Punjab and AIMS Educational System, Mr. Almas Ayub Sabir, and the Editor of The Spokesman newspaper, Mr. Naveed Ahmed Khan. The event was attended by distinguished personalities from social, educational, journalistic, and business circles. Prior to the dinner, the honored guests, accompanied by Chief Editor of Pasban News Azizur Rahman Mujahid, Country Head



of Isar Trust Muhammad Arif Khan, and other associates, paid a special visit to where Ghazi Saqib Shakeel Jalali, senior journalist Mian Muhammad Safdar, renowned educationist Chaudhry Fazal



Akhtar, and other notable personalities warmly welcomed them.

On this occasion, the guests highly appreciated the religious, intellectual, and reformative services of the Khatm-e-Nabuwat Center, describing it as an important institution for promoting positive values, religious awareness, and

the moral development of the younger generation in society. Later, during the grand dinner hosted by Chaudhry Nadeem Manzoor Begah, detailed discussions were held on matters of mutual interest, education, social welfare, journalism, and the promotion of charitable activities. The partic-

ipants expressed their commitment to strengthening their efforts for positive social change, youth guidance, and the advancement of welfare initiatives, while the guests greatly appreciated Chaudhry Nadeem Manzoor Begah's hospitality, warmth, and excellent arrangements for the dinner.

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Trump vs Xi: The Clash of Two World Orders

The historic meeting between Donald Trump and Xi Jinping in Beijing from 13 to 15 May 2026 is not merely another diplomatic summit. It represents a confrontation between two radically different worldviews, two competing models of global order, and two opposing philosophies about power, prosperity, and humanity's future. Behind the polished smiles, ceremonial handshakes, and carefully choreographed statements lies a deep ideological divide that may define the twenty-first century.

Under Trump's leadership, the United States has embraced an uncompromising "America First" doctrine. Every alliance, every trade deal, every military commitment, and every diplomatic engagement is evaluated through a narrow national-interest lens. Washington increasingly views the world not as a shared system of cooperation but as a battlefield of transactional competition where gains for others are often perceived as losses for America. Trump's tariffs on allies and rivals alike, pressure campaigns against NATO partners, confrontational trade policies toward China, and demands that partners "pay their share" reflect this philosophy.

China, under Xi Jinping, presents itself as the opposite model. Beijing repeatedly promotes the concept of a "shared future for mankind," arguing that nations rise together or fall together. China's diplomacy emphasizes infrastructure, connec-

tivity, trade integration, and development partnerships. Xi's language consistently revolves around "win-win cooperation," multilateralism, and economic interdependence rather than military alliances or ideological confrontation. Whether one accepts China's narrative completely or not, Beijing has undeniably invested enormous resources into projecting this image globally.

The clearest manifestation of China's approach is the Belt and Road Initiative, launched in 2013. According to estimates from institutions such as the World Bank and the Council on Foreign Relations, China's Belt and Road Initiative has involved more than 145 countries and generated infrastructure investments exceeding \$1 trillion through ports, highways, railways, power plants, industrial zones, and digital infrastructure projects.

In countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, China has financed highways in Pakistan, ports in Greece, rail systems in East Africa, industrial parks in Central Asia, and renewable energy projects across the developing world. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and other Chinese-backed financial mechanisms have expanded alternatives to Western-led lending institutions. China argues that development—not military intervention—is the

real foundation of peace.

Supporters of Beijing's model point to measurable outcomes. Nations connected through Belt and Road projects have seen increases in trade volumes, logistics efficiency, electricity generation capacity, and industrial productivity. China's trade with Belt and Road partner countries surpassed \$3 trillion in recent years, while Chinese overseas construction contracts and investments continue reshaping large portions of the Global South.

At the technological level, China is also attempting to project itself as a provider rather than a gatekeeper. Chinese companies and research institutions have increasingly supported open-source artificial intelligence platforms, telecommunications infrastructure, and digital payment systems. Beijing frames this strategy as democratizing technology access, particularly for developing nations that cannot afford Western-controlled ecosystems.

Washington, however, views China's rise through a completely different lens. Successive American administrations—especially under Trump—have increasingly defined China as America's primary strategic rival. The United States accuses China of unfair trade practices, intellectual property theft, industrial espionage, military expansion, and efforts to displace

American global leadership. The rivalry is no longer limited to tariffs or trade deficits; it now spans semiconductors, artificial intelligence, rare earth minerals, cybersecurity, quantum computing, and military dominance in the Indo-Pacific.

The result is a world drifting toward economic fragmentation. The United States has imposed sweeping export controls on advanced semiconductor technology destined for China and pressured allies to reduce dependence on Chinese supply chains. Beijing, in turn, has accelerated efforts toward technological self-sufficiency and diversification away from U.S.-controlled systems.

Trump's return to aggressive economic nationalism has also strained America's relationships with traditional allies. European leaders increasingly speak of "strategic autonomy," seeking to reduce dependence on Washington in defense, energy, and industrial policy. Canada and parts of Europe have openly resisted aspects of U.S. trade pressure and unilateral sanctions policies. Even in the Middle East, where American influence once appeared unshakable, regional powers are diversifying partnerships toward China, Russia, and other emerging blocs.

The contrast between Washington and Beijing became even sharper during recent Middle Eastern crises. China positioned itself as a diplomatic broker, most notably facilitating rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

International Day of Living Together in Peace, 16 May, 2026

Today, Pakistan joins the international community in observing the International Day of Living Together in Peace. This day highlights the importance of building peaceful, harmonious, and united societies at both the national and international levels. At the national level, fostering a social environment that promotes peace is not only part of our visionary heritage but also a constitutional responsibility.

In this context, the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, clearly articulated our national priorities when he stated: "We believe in the principle of honesty and fair play in both national and international dealings and are prepared to make our utmost contributions to the promotion of peace and prosperity within and without."

These principles are the foundation of our proud national identity and continue to guide our national efforts towards creating a more harmonious and united national and global society. The Government of Pakistan remains firmly committed to take practical measures for the establishment of a peaceful, tolerant, and cohesive society where every citizen, regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion, can live with dignity. The Constitution of Pakistan also provides safeguards against all forms of discrimination, including any provincial, ethnic, sectarian, and regional prejudices.

Pakistan is home to diverse languages, cultures, schools of thought, and rich civilizational traditions. This social and cultural diversity is a source of our national strength. Positive national narratives, such as Paigham-e-Pakistan, aim to eliminate ideological and practical extremism while promoting national unity and social harmony.

Alongside Constitutional guarantees for human rights, effective policy and practical interventions remain indispensable. In this regard, the Government has formulated the "National Action Plan on Human Rights," aimed at women's empowerment, child protection, and the promotion of the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Implementation of Pakistan's first "National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights" is also underway to promote responsible business conduct, protection of labour rights, elimination of discrimination, and effective remedies for human rights violations linked to business activities. These policy measures lay the foundation for a just, inclusive, and equitable society. Through the "Human Rights Awareness Programme," the Government is further promoting the values of tolerance, unity, and social cohesion.

Moreover, the Government has played a key role in strengthening institutional mechanisms through the establishment and operationalization of the National Commission for Human Rights. At the provincial level, District Human Rights Committees have also been established to promote social harmony at the grassroots level. These initiatives are being further reinforced through the "National Strategy on Prevention of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence" and the Minority Welfare Fund.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Awsat)

One Constitution Avenue: A Chronicle of Corruption

One Constitution Avenue in Islamabad is linked with elite corruption involving manipulation of legal frameworks for private gain, causing losses to the public exchequer and eroding trust in justice. Its history includes legal maneuvering, financial default, judicial irregularities, and political complicity, transforming a legitimate national initiative into large-scale appropriation of valuable state land. The project began before the 2005 Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Summit when Islamabad lacked a five-star hotel, prompting the Capital Development Authority to lease two prime sites, including a 13.5-acre plot on Constitution Avenue in the Red Zone near key state institutions, intended for a luxury hotel. During bidding, experienced hotelier Sadruddin Hashwani withdrew after finding the terms financially unviable, leaving the project to Hafeez Pasha, a Faisalabad-based textile mill owner with no hospitality experience, whose consortium outbid others despite the high cost.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

After winning the bid, a company called BNP Private Limited, not part of the original consortium, paid only about 15 percent of the Rs. 4.88 billion lease and took control of the land. Following the appointment of an associate of Pasha as Director Legal at the CDA, the lease terms were altered to allow residential apartments instead of a hotel, converting the project into a highly profitable real estate venture. When Hashwani challenged this change in court, the CDA issued a notice, but Pasha falsely claimed he was building a hotel while continuing apartment construction. He then secured a zero-interest loan worth billions from the Bank of Punjab and began selling 263 luxury apartments at extremely high prices, generating over Rs. 200 billion. Despite

this, he refused to pay the remaining 85 percent of the land cost to the CDA and defaulted on the bank loan, claiming financial losses, effectively retaining massive profits from the project while evading all major financial obligations.

For years, a strange paralysis gripped the relevant authorities. Despite clear violations, the CDA slowed its activity, seemingly content to let the project rise. The political noise around the case intensified significantly during the last tenure of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, with the case gaining some momentum in the courts. However, as is the pattern in Pakistan, a change of government disrupted the legal trajectory. It is at this critical juncture that the narrative descends from white-collar crime into a surreal tale of judicial rationalization. At some point during the project's development, Hafeez Pasha, seeking to secure powerful patrons, gifted free flats to a select group of very big people. Among the names that have surfaced in this scandal are Justice Gulzar Ahmed (later Chief Justice), and, most explosively, Chief Justice Saqib Nisar and former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The allegation is specific: that these high-profile figures received luxury apartments in One Constitution Avenue for free, or on terms so preferential they amounted to gifts, in exchange for legal or political cover.

The payoff, according to the chronicle of corruption, came swiftly and dramatically. Just when the case seemed to be heading towards a definitive resolution against the developer, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Saqib Nisar, who was himself reportedly a beneficiary of a free flat, sat in the Supreme Court to deliver a verdict that would stun legal experts and the nation. In a moment of bizarre, almost mystical legal reasoning, Justice Nisar reportedly prefaced his decision by stating

that he had had a dream at night. He declared that in the light of this divine vision, he had decided that while it was true that the land belonged to the government, it was true that it had been captured, and it was true that the construction was illegal, he was nonetheless going to legalize the entire project. He reasoned that since the flats had already been built and people (including, conveniently, himself and other powerful figures) had taken possession, it would be unjust to demolish them. Therefore, he ruled, the land's price would be fixed at the rate from fifteen years ago, despite the immense appreciation of property values in the interim. Furthermore, he ordered that Hafeez Pasha, who had collected 200 billion rupees from flat sales, would be allowed to pay this ancient, undervalued price—approximately 17 billion rupees—in easy installments over a period of eight years. The developer had evaded paying his original dues, collected hundreds of billions, and was now being rewarded with a discounted price and a payment plan that resembled a charity trust. And the final, predictable twist in this judicial farce is that even this laughably lenient 17 billion rupee settlement has not been honored; Hafeez Pasha has reportedly defaulted on the installments as well, yet the flats remain standing.

This matrix of corruption was held together by a strong relationship of mutual benefit. Many famous personalities—including Imran Khan, Aitzaz Ahsan, Shandana Gulzar, Nasirul Mulk, and Kashmala Tariq etc.—have been named as owners or residents of these flats. This created a powerful constituency of influential stakeholders who had a vested interest in the project's survival. The apathy of Imran Khan's government is particularly glaring. When the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) came to power on a slogan of constructing a 'Naya Pakistan' based on rule of law and accountability, it was presented with the perfect test case. Instead of moving against this symbol of elite capture, the

Continued on Page 7

Speak With Confidence

Speaking with confidence is an important skill in everyday life. Whether you are talking in class, giving a presentation, attending an interview, or speaking with friends, addressing public confidence helps people understand and trust your message. Many people feel nervous while speaking, but confidence can be developed with practice and the right habits.

The first step is to believe in your message. When you trust your ideas, your voice becomes stronger and more convincing. As Peter T. McIntyre said, "Confidence comes not from always being right but from not fearing to be wrong." Mistakes are a natural part of learning, so do not be afraid of them.

Another important point is to speak slowly and clearly. Fast speaking often shows nervousness and makes it difficult for listeners to understand. A calm and steady voice gives a better impression. It is rightly said, "The most powerful speaker uses silence wisely." Small pauses can make your words more meaningful.

Body language also plays a major role in confident speaking. Standing straight, making eye contact, and using natural hand movements show confidence. Amy Cuddy once said, "Your body language may shape who you are." Positive body language can improve both your confidence and your communication.

Nervousness is common, but it should

not stop you from speaking. Deep breathing and positive thinking can help control fear. As Susan Jeffers wisely said, "Feel the fear and do it anyway." Confidence grows when we face our fears instead of avoiding them.

Choosing words carefully is equally important. Simple and polite language makes communication more effective.

Good speakers also know the importance of listening. Stephen R. Covey said, "Most people do not listen with the intent to understand." Listening carefully helps us respond wisely and build stronger conversations.

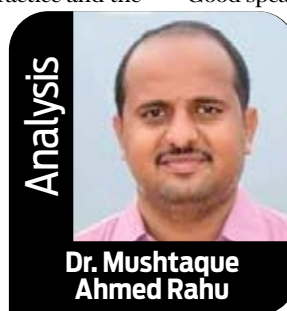
Practice is the key to improvement. The more you speak, the more confident you become.

Speaking in front of a mirror, reading aloud, or joining discussions can help greatly. Remember, "Confidence comes with practice."

It is also important to accept imperfection. Nobody speaks all the time perfectly. True courage means being able to speak even when you feel imperfect.

Finally, Match your tone to your message and speak naturally. A kind tone creates warmth, while a serious tone shows importance. As Oscar Wilde said, "Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."

In conclusion, confidence in speaking is not a gift for a few people; it is a skill that anyone can develop. With belief, practice, patience, and authenticity, every person can learn to speak with confidence and leave a positive impression on others.



Analysis

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Rahu

Abu Dhabi Marks a New Chapter in Ethiopian-Arab Cultural Diplomacy

Official Launch of the Arabic Edition of Medemer Mengist, Authored by H. E. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed

Spokesman Report

ABU DHABI: Abu Dhabi witnessed a landmark moment in Ethiopian-Arab cultural and intellectual diplomacy on 14 May 2026, as the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia hosted the official launch of the Arabic edition of "Medemer Mengist" ("Medemer State") — a seminal philosophical and governance work authored by His Excellency Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. The event drew significant attendees including UAE cabinet ministers, ambassadors, business leaders, academics, and prominent members of both the Ethiopian and Arab communities — cementing the occasion as one of the most significant Ethiopian cultural events held in the UAE in recent years.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of His Excellency Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan Al Nahyan, Cabinet Member and Minister of State at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Abdullah Sultan bin Awad Al Nuaimi, Minister of Justice,



and senior UAE government officials alongside a distinguished gathering of ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions, and leaders from the private sector and civil society.

In his keynote address, H. E. Sheikh Shakhboot underscored the importance of dialogue and cultural understanding among nations and peoples, while highlighting the strong and steadily growing relations between the two nations. He further reaffirmed the UAE's commitment to deepening its strategic partnership with Ethiopia across cultural, economic, and diplomatic fronts.

H. E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the UAE, emphasized the transformative significance of the Arabic translation. He described the publication not merely as a linguistic exercise but as a bridge — an invitation for Arabic-speaking readers across the region to engage directly with Ethiopia's evolving political philosophy and its vision for the future.

The launch ceremony featured a prominent Ethiopian Scholar, Professor Adem Kamil, who offered a rich intellectual review



of Medemer Mengist and its policy dimensions. The scholar highlighted the book's philosophical grounding in synergy — the principle that collective effort, guided by shared values and inclusive institutions, generates outcomes far greater than the

sum of individual parts. He also noted the particular relevance of the Medemer model for Arab-African relations, as both regions navigate questions of development, identity, and regional integration in a rapidly changing global landscape.

Beyond its intellectual programme, the evening offered guests a vibrant and immersive experience of Ethiopia's cultural heritage. Traditional Ethiopian music and dance performances brought the vibrancy of the country's diverse communities to the

heart of Abu Dhabi, while an exquisite selection of Ethiopian culinary offerings allowed guests to savour the country's storied gastronomic traditions.

The cultural programme drew a warm and enthusiastic reception from the audience — many of whom expressed admiration for the depth and beauty of Ethiopia's artistic heritage. For many attending diplomats and business leaders, the evening offered a first and deeply personal encounter with Ethiopian cultural expression.

The launch of Medemer Mengist in Arabic marks a defining moment in the cultural and diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates. As the book reaches Arabic-speaking audiences across the region, the evening stood as a powerful testament to what the two nations are building together: a relationship grounded not only in trade and strategic interest, but in a shared conviction that ideas, culture, and open dialogue are among the most enduring foundations of genuine partnership.

Cleft Hospital Gujrat Highlights Urgent Need for Awareness

Media and Academics Unite to Promote Free Cleft Treatment Services Across Pakistan



Anwar Chohan

GUJRAT: The Chairman of the University of Southern Punjab and AIMS Educational System, Mr. Almas Ayub Sabir, along with the Editor of The Spokesman, Mr. Naveed Ahmed Khan, paid a special visit to Cleft Hospital Gujrat, where they met with the newly elected President of the Pakistan Cleft Lip and Palate Association, Al-Hajj Amjad Farooq, congratulated him warmly, and paid rich tribute to his outstanding welfare services while expressing their best wishes. On this occasion, Chairman of Friendship Busi-

ness Group Chaudhry Nadeem Manzoor Begah, Country Manager of Isar Welfare Trust Muhammad Arif Khan, and Coordinator of Ayesha Bashir Cleft Hospital Gujrat, Azizur Rahman Mujahid, also accompanied them. Upon arrival at the hospital, Dr. Ejaz Bashir and Hamza Ejaz warmly welcomed the guests and provided them with a detailed briefing while giving them a tour of various departments.

During the visit, it was shared that Cleft Hospital Gujrat has so far provided completely free, world-class treatment to more than 28,000 children suffering from cleft lips, cleft



palates, and other congenital facial deformities, bringing new hope and happiness to thousands of families. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Ejaz Bashir said that the hospital is not merely a medical facility but a great humanitarian mission dedicated to restoring smiles to suffering children; however, there is a strong need for an effective awareness campaign across the country so that more deserving children can benefit from these free medical services. Chairman Almas Ayub Sabir highly appreciated the hospital's exceptional services and assured full support from his offices and educational insti-

tutions in Islamabad to help promote this noble mission.

Meanwhile, Naveed Ahmed Khan stated that his media house has always highlighted the remarkable services of Ayesha Bashir Cleft Hospital and will continue to actively promote this humanitarian mission so that the message of hope and treatment reaches every deserving child.

The guests also praised the leadership and social contributions of Al-Hajj Amjad Farooq and expressed their commitment to extending every possible support for the welfare of children suffering from cleft conditions.

Abrogation of special status of Jammu and Kashmir, only succeeded in intensifying demand for 'Azadi'. Victoria Schofield



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: British historian Victoria Schofield, speaking at an IRS/YFK policy discussion on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, argued that the 2019 revocation of special status, coupled with militarization and communication restrictions, deepened alienation and strengthened self-determination demands. She advocated for an inclusive political process reflecting genuine Kashmiri representation, stating that sustainable peace depends on dialogue replacing hostility and solutions being based on on-ground realities rather than rigid territorial claims. Schofield stressed the necessity of including China in any meaningful settlement framework due to its strategic role, specifically referencing Aksai Chin and the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict legacy. She noted that while territorial aspects of the dispute have remained static since the 1948-49 war and Simla Agreement, the nuclear environment, technological advancements, and geopolitical competition have fundamentally changed the strategic landscape, increasing risks of miscalculation from rapid mobilization and escalatory rhetoric. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem confirmed Pakistan's commitment to the Kashmiri right to self-determination grounded in justice and human rights, despite the fragile ceasefire. Senator Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur emphasized that perpetual hostility between India and Pakistan is unsustainable, warning nuclear conflict would be catastrophic for South Asia. Lt Gen Asif Yasin Malik identified Kashmir as the core driver of India-Pakistan tensions, making peace unattainable without addressing it. Kashmiri participants underscored the centrality of self-determination, narrative control, and inclusive peace efforts. A recurring theme was the critical role of information warfare and media in influencing international views, leading to calls for enhanced intellectual and diplomatic efforts to counter misinformation and highlight the lived realities of Kashmiris.

KOICA and NTU Lay Foundation of Pakistan-Korea Technical Textile Center (PKTC)

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the National Textile University (NTU) Faisalabad have jointly laid the foundation stone of the Pakistan-Korea Technical Textile Center (PKTC), paving the way for innova-

tion in high-value textiles in Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Rashid Masood said the textile industry is the backbone of Pakistan's economy, contributing over 50% to the country's total exports. However, growing global competition in conventional fabrics is compelling Pakistan to move toward high-value industrial textiles to main-

tain competitiveness in the international market.

KOICA Country Director Ji Ho Yun stated that this project is being provided under South Korea's Official Development Assistance (ODA). The center will house state-of-the-art laboratories for non-woven fabric production, along with a library and

classrooms. It will also offer professional training for industry, facilitate joint research, and develop policy-level recommendations.

After the ceremony, the contractor presented the safety plan, and Ji Ho Yun distributed safety gear to site workers. The NTU Rector also appreciated the services of Dean CET, Prof.



Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, and the project coordinator, Dr. Muhammad Qamar Khan.

Through European Union funding, UNODC marks the Handover of Prison Management Information System in Balochistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with European Union (EU) funding, formally handed over the Prison Management Information System (PMIS) to the Balochistan Prison Department in Islamabad on May 15, 2026.

This system grants secure access to detainee information for 13 Balochistan facilities, including 11 prisons and offices of the IG and DIG Prisons. The PMIS aims to improve coordination with courts and law enforcement, facilitate data-driven decision-making, and

ensure prison staff adhere to human rights standards, such as The Nelson Mandela Rules, treating prisoners with dignity and offering special care to the vulnerable.

Jeroen Willems, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Pakistan, highlighted that the PMIS is part of the EU-funded 'Deliver Justice Project', which has also supported increasing female police presence, providing legal aid for women, training justice sector professionals on human rights, and establishing mediation centers. The EU remains committed to citizen-centric, inclusive, and sustainable

justice sector reforms, especially for underserved areas. The digital system will benefit prisoners' families via a digital visitor management system to reduce wait times and enhance transparency.

Digital record-keeping is expected to boost accountability and public trust through better-managed prisons. Inspector General Prisons Balochistan, Capt. (R) Abdul Saed Naveed, noted the system's improvement in operational efficiency and record management.

UNODC Representative Mr. Troels Vester stated the PMIS signifies a shared commitment to modern, transparent,



and human rights-compliant prison management, built upon sustained institutional support and capacity building for long-term sustainability. To ensure longevity, UNODC

provided extensive technical support, staff training, and knowledge transfer across Balochistan, including establishing a Prison Training Academy, an eLearning Centre, and a Central Command Unit. The Government of Balochistan has committed dedicated staff and budgetary resources for maintenance.

Barrister Aqeel Malik, Minister of State for Law and Justice, underscored the importance of digital reforms, noting that with Balochistan's adoption, all four Pakistani provinces have now transitioned to digital prison management.

He acknowledged UNODC's

support across Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, marking a milestone toward a modern corrections system.

The €20 million 'Deliver Justice Project' (2021-2026) focuses on strengthening criminal justice institutions and improving access to justice, particularly in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It supports reforms in police, prosecution, judiciary, prisons, and legislation through digitalization and governance enhancements, aiming for transparent, accountable, and citizen-centric service delivery, prioritizing women and vulnerable groups.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
165,596.07	166,498.83
Day's High	Day's Low
166,924.48	165,291.53
Index Value	Change
12,645,893,676	-902.76
Percentage	Time
-0.54%	15 May, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
10,195.37	-177.56
Percentage	Time
-177.56	15 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
49,609.87	-453.59
Percentage	Time
-0.91%	15 May, 3:22 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
61,409.29	-1,244.76
Percentage	Time
-1.99%	15 May, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	198.36	202.25
Bahrain Dinar	731.47	742.75
Canadian Dollar	201.53	205.46
China Yuan	40	41.05
Danish Krone	43.35	43.75
Euro	324.32	328.95
Hong Kong Dollar	35.06	36.03
Indian Rupee	2.50	2.75
Japanese Yen	1.7423	1.8424
Kuwaiti Dinar	879.28	889.06
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.20
New Zealand \$	162.10	165.35
Norwegians Krone	27.70	28
Omani Riyal	722.05	732.85
Qatari Riyal	74.65	75.55
Saudi Riyal	74.35	75.35
Singapore Dollar	216.55	220.95
Swedish Korona	30.35	30.65
Swiss Franc	352.69	357.68
Thai Bhat	8.50	8.70
U.A.E Dirham	75.75	76.85
UK Pound Sterling	372.17	377.30
US Dollar	279.05	279.70

Infinix Unleashes GT 50 Pro with HydroFlow Cooling in PUBG Mobile Collab

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Infinix, the leading smartphone brand in Pakistan, has officially launched the GT 50 Pro with the industry's largest HydroFlow liquid cooling architecture, in an exclusive collaboration with PUBG Mobile at the PMGO-SA event, marking a landmark moment for mobile gaming across the country.

Talking about the launch, Infinix CEO Simon Feng said: "The GT 50 Pro is a statement of what Infinix stands for, pushing boundaries where it matters most to our users. From the industry's largest HydroFlow Liquid Cooling to the precision of the Pressure-Sense GT Trigger and the raw power of the MediaTek Dimensity 8400 Ultimate 5G, every element of this device is engineered for gamers who refuse to compromise. Partnering with PUBG Mobile and bringing this experience to the PMGO-SA stage is exactly the kind of moment we build for."

Engro Elengy Terminal Handles Country's Largest Ever LNG vessel!

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Engro Elengy Terminal (EETL) has successfully received and began offloading the largest LNG cargo in Pakistan's history on 13 May 2026, amid pressures on global energy supplies.

The handling of the Q-Flex vessel carrying over 210,000 cubic metres of LNG was a demonstration of the terminal infrastructure's strength and team's capabilities. The operation entailed a complex vessel handling. A dual-parcel discharge sequence was undertaken at the terminal safety and seamlessly while navigating tidal and draft constraints.

This accomplishment was made possible through close coordination between Port Qasim Authority (PQA), Excelerate Energy, Nakilat (NSQL), Qatar Energy, SSGC, PSO and operational teams across the terminal ecosystem.

It demonstrated the engineering capabilities and strength of all terminal teams and stakeholders. The significance of this key moment extends far beyond the size of the LNG cargo. For millions across Pakistan, it means energy will continue to flow when it is needed most.

Homes will remain powered, businesses remain operational, food and essential supplies continue to reach people, and everyday life moves forward without disruption, especially during a challenging period. Such milestones demonstrate that the readiness and availability of terminal infrastructure at all times remains key to supporting Pakistan's energy needs.

Terminal infrastructure is more than just steel, pipelines, and ports; it enables energy continuity for people, stability for the economy, and confidence in the country's ability to navigate complex circumstances to reach a better future.



Mangoes' Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani visits a stall showcasing Pakistani Mangoes after inaugurating the 33rd Branch of Imtiaz Group, marking another milestone in the expansion of one of Pakistan's leading retail chains.



President Zardari Honors Mian Kashif Ashfaq with Tamgha-e-Imtiaz



Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: A prestigious ceremony was held at Aiwan-e-Sadr Islamabad where President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari conferred civil awards upon personalities who rendered outstanding services in various fields of life. The ceremony was attended by senior government officials, representatives of business and industrial sectors, social figures and other distinguished guests. During the ceremony, President Asif Ali Zardari awarded the "Tamgha-e-Imtiaz" to Chairman of Pakistan Furniture Council, Chief Executive Officer of ChenOne Group and prominent businessman from Toba Tek Singh Mian Kashif Ashfaq, in recognition of his remarkable contributions to the business, industrial and economic sectors. The participants appreciated the services of Mian Kashif Ashfaq and congratulated him on receiving the prestigious award.

MG Motor Pakistan Announces Ready Delivery of MG HS PHEV Ahead of Eid-ul-Adha!

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: As vehicle purchasing activity traditionally increases before Eid, MG Motor Pakistan has announced ready delivery availability of the current-generation MG HS PHEV, allowing customers to receive their vehicles ahead of the festive season without extended waiting periods.

As part of the ongoing offer, MG is also providing customers additional savings through its "Start Smart" initiative, where

the ex-factory price and on-road price remain the same for buyers of the first-generation MG HS PHEV.

The MG HS PHEV combines plug-in hybrid technology with everyday urban practicality, offering over 50 km of electric driving range along with advanced safety and driver assistance features suited for both city and highway driving.

Speaking on the announcement, Jianqiang Shao, CEO of MG Motor Pakistan



said "Eid is an important period for families across Pakistan, and many customers prefer timely vehicle delivery before the holidays. Through the ready availability of the MG HS PHEV, we aim to offer a more convenient ownership experience during this high-demand period."

Governor Suggests Global "Made in Pakistan" Expos to Boost Exports

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan Friday said that conducting a series of single-country "Made in Pakistan" expos across different regions of the world can play a vital role in promoting Pakistani products in international markets besides enhancing export potential.

Talking here today to a delegation of furniture manufacturers led by Chief Executive Officer of Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq (Tamgha-e-Imtiaz) the Governor said Pakistan possesses immense industrial and creative potential, particularly in the furniture sector, which

is capable of earning valuable foreign exchange. He said Pakistani furniture products are gaining recognition due to their quality craftsmanship, elegant designs and use of durable materials. He added that the local furniture industry has the potential to successfully compete in international markets if provided with proper marketing opportunities, modern technology and policy support.

Speaking on the occasion, Mian Kashif Ashfaq (Tamgha-e-Imtiaz) said the furniture industry is contributing significantly to the national economy and providing employment opportunities to thousands of skilled workers and artisans across the country.

Powering Growth Through Inclusion and Innovation SME Banking in Pakistan

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are widely recognised as the backbone of Pakistan's economy, contributing significantly to employment generation, industrial output, and export potential. Accounting for nearly 90% of all businesses in the country, SMEs play a pivotal role in driving economic activity across sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, retail, and services. Despite their importance, these enterprises have historically faced challenges in accessing formal financial services making SME banking a critical enabler of sustainable economic growth.

At its core, SME banking is about bridging the gap between financial institutions and small businesses

that often lack collateral, formal documentation, or credit history. By offering tailored financial products such as working capital loans, trade financing, and digital payment solutions banks empower SMEs to scale operations, improve productivity, and compete in both local and global markets. This access to finance allows businesses not only to survive but to innovate and expand.

In Pakistan, the growth of SME banking reflects a broader shift within the financial sector towards inclusivity and diversification. Traditional banking

models, which once prioritised large corporations, are increasingly evolving to accommodate smaller enterprises. This transition is not merely strategic but essential, as SMEs represent untapped economic potential. By integrating SMEs into the formal financial ecosystem, banks can expand their customer base while contributing to national economic resilience.

The relationship between SMEs and the banking sector is mutually reinforcing. On one hand, SMEs depend on banks for capital and financial tools; on the other, banks rely on SMEs as a key growth segment. As

SMEs grow, they generate demand for more sophisticated financial services, including digital banking, supply chain financing, and investment products. This dynamic encourages financial institutions to innovate, improve risk assessment models, and adopt technology-driven solutions.

Microfinance banking plays a particularly important role in supporting SMEs at the grassroots level. Many small enterprises begin as microbusinesses often informal and family-run and gradually evolve into structured SMEs. Microfinance institutions provide the initial financial support that enables this transition, offering small loans and financial literacy that lay the foundation for business growth. As these enter-

prises expand, they move into the SME banking space, creating a continuum of financial inclusion.

The rise of digital finance has further strengthened this ecosystem. Digital lending platforms, mobile banking, and simplified onboarding processes have reduced barriers to entry for SMEs, especially in rural and underserved areas. By leveraging technology, financial institutions can reach a wider audience, streamline operations, and offer faster, more efficient services. This is particularly relevant in a country like Pakistan, where digital adoption is rapidly increasing.

As an example of this evolving landscape, Khushhali Microfinance Bank has played a role in supporting small businesses through accessible finan-

cial solutions and digital innovation. Leaders within the sector continue to emphasise the importance of technology in expanding financial access. As noted by Aftab Alam, "Digital financing is not just about convenience it is about unlocking opportunities for small businesses that were previously beyond the reach of formal banking."

Ultimately, SME banking is more than a financial service, it is a catalyst for economic transformation. By empowering small businesses, strengthening financial systems, and leveraging digital innovation, Pakistan can unlock the full potential of its entrepreneurial landscape and build a more inclusive and resilient economy.

Author is Freelance Journalist based in Karachi.



Asad Hussain

Secretary Sports Punjab chairs an important meeting to review sports scheme

LAHORE: Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Fazlur Rehman has presided over an important meeting regarding sports development schemes at the Punjab Stadium on Friday.

The under construction sports development schemes of all the divisions were reviewed in detail in the meeting. Secretary Sports Punjab Fazlur Rehman also took a progress report from the sports officers of North, South and Central Punjab.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, Additional Secretary Sports Shabbir Hussain Cheema, Deputy Director Planning Mirza Nadeem and PMU officers participated in the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Fazlur Rehman said that construction work on 184 sports development schemes is



under way across the Punjab province. "Construction work is in progress on 69 schemes in Central Punjab, 45 in South Punjab and 59 in North Punjab.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Fazlur Rehman directed the officials concerned to complete the under-construction sports schemes

as soon as possible. "There will be no compromise on the quality of material, construction work and Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules".

Zone-VI Become Champion 3rd Consecutive Years of Regional Inter District Senior (Karachi Region)

Unbeaten Century by Muhammad Taha Mehmood, Brilliant Batting by Ghulam Ashraf 85, Deadly Bowling by Muhammad Areeb Ahmed 5/20, Rehman Ghani 5/23

KARACHI: Zone-VI Become Champion of Regional Inter District Senior (Karachi Region) after beating Zone-V by an innings and 42 runs in their last Group League Match of the 7th round of the Tournament.

The Tournament is being organized by Pakistan Cricket Board. The highlights of the 2nd days play was Brilliant Batting by Ghulam Ashraf 85, deadly bowling by Slow left arm leg spinners Muhammad Areeb Ahmed 5/20, Rehman Ghani 5/23 and off spinner Saifullah 4/46.

The Following are the Summarized Scores of Close of play on first day.

At UBL Sports Complex Zone-VI beat Zone-V by an innings and 42 runs Zone-V 1st Innings 164 and 2nd Innings 144 all-out 36.4 overs. Shahzad Khan 48 5x4 4x6, Muhammad Hassan Iqbal 41 6x4 1x6. Saifullah (ob) 4/46. Muhammad Makki (mf) 3/37.

In reply Zone-VI 1st Innings 350/6/70 overs. Ghulam Ashraf 85 7x4 5x6, Muhammad Arbaz Khan 64 3x4 3x6, Aibad Khan 50 9x4, Saifullah 41 3x4 2x6 notout, Kashif Ali 39, Abdullah Alam 27, Adeel Meo 20. Aminullah 2/42.

At Baqai Cricket Ground Zone-IV beat Zone-III by 9 Wickets.

Zone-III 1st Innings 156 and 104 allout in 51.3 overs. Waqas Akbar 35, Abdul Rafay 27. Muhammad Areeb Ahmed (sla) 5/20, M. Ahad Ali (ob) 3/19.

Zone-IV 1st Innings 157 and 2nd Innings 104/1 in 23.1 overs. Muhammad Ahad Ali 54 9x4 not out, Imran Shah 27, Salah Khan 23 not out.

At KCCA Stadium Zone-I 1st Innings 145 and 2nd Innings close of play 2nd day 378/8 in 75 overs. Muhammad Taha Mehmood 127 16x4 1x6 not out, Farmanullah 46 8x4, Muhammad Umar Sheikh 38, Wahab Zafar 27, Rehman Ghani 25, Zubair Khan 21 not 3. Ali Shinwar 3/51. Zone-I over all lead 345 runs.

Zone-II 1st 127 allout in 57.3 overs. Wajhi Fawad Khan 40, Muhammad Siddiq 22

Rehman Ghani (sla) 5/23, Zubair Khan 2/24, Bahadur Ali 2/26.

Mazhar Thathal leads 5th Pakistan Trade Delegation in Paris Trade Exhibition

Commerce Desk

PARIS: In a significant move to bolster bilateral economic ties, the Mazhar Hussain Thathal Chairman/ CEO Global Trade and Expo Centre (GTEC) Pakistan successfully led the 5th Pakistan-France Trade and Business Delegation May 2026** to the Foire de Paris trade exhibition in Paris France.

The potential trade delegation focused on showcasing Pakistani industrial potential and fostering new collaborations within the French trade market.

Chairman Mazhar Thathal and Director of International Trade Liaqat Thathal spearheaded the mission, with the representation of High-level business community including President of Mardan chamber of small traders and industry and senior members of Chambers of Commerce, including Mardan, Sialkot, Haripur,



Rawalpindi, and Islamabad, participated in 5th Pakistan Trader Delegation—with the main objective to explore the French consumer market at one of Europe's largest trade fairs and identify innovative business ideas for bilateral investment and trade opportunities.

French exhibitors expressed keen interest in Pakistani trade potential, setting the stage for follow-up delegations and long-term industrial partnerships.

The Foire de Paris 2026 held at the Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, served as the primary stage for the Pakistani delegation to engage with international innovators.

Mazhar Thathal emphasized that this fifth consecutive mission underscores Pakistan's commitment to the French market and the global standing of GTEC.

Banks cannot drive businesses by merely holding money, SM Tanveer

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Patron-in-Chief of the United Business Group (UBG), SM Tanveer, said that businesses cannot function simply by keeping money in banks, adding that investment and the operation of industries are essential to activate the economy. He said UBG has prepared a shadow budget which will soon be presented. He further stated that UBG has established an economic think tank to provide recommendations regarding the federal budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

He expressed these views while addressing a dinner hosted in his honor by UBG President Zubair Tufail last night. Renowned industrialist and social leader Bashir Jan Mohammad, Khalid Tawab, and the host also addressed the gathering.

The event was attended by former Governor of Sindh Moinuddin Haider, Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Salman Tufail, Mazhar Ali Nasir, Hanif Gohar, Ahsan Bakhtawari, Dr. Abdul Bari, Tariq Haleem, Mian Zahid Hussain, Waseem-ur-Rehman, Malik Khuda Baksh, Umar Rehan, Rashid Siddiqui, Dr. Imran Yousuf, Shehzad Mubeen, and others. SM Tanveer said there is an urgent



need for the trade policy to address how the 80 closed industries can be revived. He added that he has visited all four provinces of Pakistan, including Gilgit-Baltistan, and has traveled to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa more than 13 times to understand the issues faced by the business community there.

He said that the ruling and opposition groups within FPCCI have joined hands because internal conflicts damage their respect and allow governments to take advantage. He added that Bashir Jan Mohammad advised them to end differences and work together for the business community. He also acknowledged Anjum Nisar as an important leader and said they have pledged to work jointly for the improvement of the national

economy.

He said a five-member high-power committee has been formed through consultation to nominate candidates for the Federation on merit and based on vote bank strength. Candidates must come forward with the intention of serving the business community sincerely for two years and improving the country's economy. "We need results so that we can raise the standard of FPCCI," he remarked.

He further revealed that an economic think tank has also been established under the leadership of Bashir Jan Mohammad, which has prepared a five-year economic development plan along with the shadow budget.

UBG President Zubair Tufail said that SM Tanveer is a courageous Patron-in-

Chief of UBG who is visiting remote areas to understand the problems of the business community. He added that due to his leadership, the future of UBG is secure.

He said that Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and energy remain major issues, while industries are receiving expensive electricity and gas. For export growth and competitiveness in international markets, Pakistan's industry needs affordable electricity and gas.

Bashir Jan Mohammad said that SM Tanveer is undoubtedly the best successor to SM Muneer, and expressed happiness that the entire business community of the country has become united. He said governments used to create divisions among them, but now they are united and there will be only one election.

He added that if the elite class is facing severe problems in the country, one can imagine the condition of the poor. Therefore, the time has come to give back to the country, and businessmen should establish schools and hospitals in their names.

Khalid Tawab said that under the current circumstances, they cannot afford conflicts and disputes. He stressed that industries must be established in the greater national interest so that unemployment can be reduced.

Trump vs Xi: The Clash of Two World Orders

Continued from Page 4

in 2023. Meanwhile, critics argue that U. S. military interventions over the past two decades—from Iraq to Libya and beyond—have often left instability, destruction, and humanitarian crises in their wake.

The United States still remains the world's strongest military and financial superpower. The U. S. dollar dominates global trade and reserves, American universities lead in innovation, and U. S. corporations remain central to the global economy. Yet the image of America as the unquestioned architect of the international order has weakened significantly. Endless wars, political polarization, debt expansion exceeding \$35 trillion, trade confrontations, and growing global resentment toward unilateral sanctions have all damaged Washington's soft power. China, meanwhile, presents itself

as patient, pragmatic, and economically focused. Beijing rarely frames its rise as ideological conquest; instead, it frames it as shared prosperity. Critics, of course, accuse China of creating debt dependency, expanding authoritarian influence, and leveraging economic ties for strategic gain. Yet many developing nations still see China as a source of roads, railways, ports, energy, and financing that Western powers either ignored or conditioned heavily.

The deeper issue is philosophical. Trump's America increasingly defines the world through competition and dominance. Xi's China speaks the language of integration and interconnected destiny. One emphasizes national primacy; the other emphasizes collective growth. One increasingly relies on sanctions, tariffs, and strategic containment; the other relies on infrastructure, connectivity, and

trade expansion. This is why the Trump-Xi meeting matters far beyond diplomacy. It symbolizes the collision of two civilizational visions. The United States wants to preserve an international system shaped overwhelmingly by American power after World War II. China wants a multipolar order where Western dominance is diluted and emerging economies gain greater influence.

Whether these two visions can coexist peacefully remains one of the defining questions of our age.

For now, both nations remain economically intertwined despite strategic hostility. Trade between the United States and China still exceeds hundreds of billions of dollars annually, global supply chains remain interconnected, and financial markets depend heavily on stability between the two giants. Yet beneath the surface,

mistrust continues to deepen.

The Beijing summit may produce agreements, temporary compromises, and carefully worded joint statements. But it will not erase the fundamental contradiction between "America First" and China's "shared destiny" narrative. One side believes prosperity must primarily strengthen national supremacy; the other claims prosperity should be distributed through interconnected development.

In the end, the real battle is not simply over tariffs, technology, or military power. It is over which philosophy the rest of the world will ultimately choose to follow.

The Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former Press Attaché to Malaysia and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Macomb, Michigan.

One Constitution Avenue: A Chronicle of Corruption

Continued from Page 4

government apparently closed its eyes to the illegality, having allegedly secured a few flats for its leader and other key figures.

The fundamental facts of the case are damningly simple. This plot on Constitution Avenue was not part of the original master plan of Islamabad designed by Greek architect Constantinos Apostolou Doxiadis. It was added later, and even then, its usage was strictly and explicitly approved only for five-star hotels. The original advertisements published by the CDA in 2004 clearly described the project solely as a hotel; there was no mention of residential apartments or commercial sale anywhere in the original documentation. The lease was awarded at

Rs. 75,000 per square yard, a price that paled in comparison to the Rs. 190,000 per square yard commercial rates of the Centaurus plot, precisely because the use was restricted to the less profitable hotel business. By illegally converting the use to residential, the developer captured a massive windfall profit at the direct expense of the state.

In April 2026, after years of dithering, the Islamabad High Court finally upheld the CDA's decision to cancel the lease due to the massive payment defaults. Eviction notices were issued. One Constitution Avenue stands as a challenge to the nation, a demand that the people rise to put iron hands on such corrupt mafias and ensure the compliance of law and regulation for all, without any discrimination, for once and for all.

JI Protest rally

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman addressing the protest rally against rising inflation and the recent increase in petrol prices at Aabpara Chowk in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Hafiz Naeem warns of nationwide protests over inflation and fuel prices

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman, on Friday, criticising rising inflation and fuel price hikes, had announced the start of a nationwide protest movement against government policies.

He was addressing a mass rally of Jamaat-e-Islami gathered at Aabpara Chowk on Friday.

Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman

said the large turnout had disproved claims that people would not protest over rising fuel and electricity prices.

"Today marks the beginning of our major movement," he told supporters, accusing the government of implementing anti-public measures and warning that wider protests would follow if policies were not changed.

Protesters chanted slogans against the government and

demanding an immediate reduction in petrol prices.

Hafiz Naeem criticised the heavy taxation on fuel, claiming that petrol prices included Rs120 per litre in levy charges and another Rs50 in taxes.

He alleged that Pakistan's rulers were acting under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and accused successive governments of strengthening what he described as

the "IPP mafia."

He claimed billions of rupees collected from the public were benefiting only a few influential groups.

The Jamaat-e-Islami leader also criticised the governments of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the Pakistan Peoples Party over energy policies and economic conditions.

Referring to rising fuel costs, he said motorcycle riders, most of whom belong

to lower-income groups, were being heavily burdened through taxes and levies.

He announced that he would visit Chitral and Lower Dir in the coming days, and later travel to Balochistan on May 22 as part of the protest campaign.

He also warned of a nationwide strike and shutdown call, saying markets across the country would be closed if the government failed to reverse its policies.

Shazia Marri defends Bilawal after viral press conference moment

By City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader and National Assembly member Shazia Marri defended party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday after a brief exchange between the two during a press conference sparked intense debate online.

The moment occurred after the PPP parliamentary party meeting held at Parliament House in Islamabad.

During the media briefing, Bilawal was responding to a question regarding proposals from members of the federal government about transferring sectors such as education, health, and the Benazir Income Support Programme



back under federal control through a possible 28th Constitutional Amendment.

Seated beside him, Shazia

Marri stepped in to clarify that the comments had actually been made by Minister of State for Religious Affairs and

Interfaith Harmony Keso Mal Kheal Das.

Bilawal then responded curtly, saying, "I am not asking

you." Marri immediately began apologising before Bilawal cut in again with a brief "Thank you."

A short clip of the exchange quickly circulated across social media platforms, drawing criticism and sparking conversations about tone and conduct within political leadership.

Responding indirectly to the backlash on X, Marri urged people not to judge years of political collaboration based on a single public interaction.

She wrote that one isolated moment between colleagues who had worked together for years should not overshadow the PPP's broader mission of serving the public and prioritising collective welfare.

Pakistan-UAE ties remain strong despite speculation: FO

By City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan had dismissed speculation about any strain in ties with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with the Foreign Office (FO) saying relations between the two countries remained strong and unaffected by any external engagements.

Speaking at the weekly media briefing in Islamabad on Friday, FO spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Pakistan and the UAE enjoyed "strong, brotherly" relations based on mutual trust and long-standing cooperation.

"Pakistan-UAE relations are strong, brotherly, built on strong foundations," Andrabi said, adding that around 2.2 million Pakistanis



were living in the UAE and bilateral trade between the two countries stood close to \$8 billion.

He stressed that there was "absolutely no question" of any negative developments in ties between Islam-

abad and Abu Dhabi. The clarification comes amid recent media reports claiming that the Gulf state had initiated a large-scale expulsion of Pakistani workers, particularly Shia employees, suggesting a possible shift in bilateral relations. Pakistan's Interior Ministry had earlier rejected the reports.

During the briefing, Andrabi also welcomed recent calls from within India advocating dialogue with Pakistan, describing such voices as a "positive development".

"We hope that sanity will prevail in India and the warmongering and belligerence witnessed over the past several years will fade away," he said.

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Senator Dar chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation



By Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The committee considered the privatisation of three DISCOs — IESCO (Islamabad), GEPCO (Gujranwala) and FESCO (Faisalabad), aimed at improving efficiency and financial sustainability in the power distribution system.

The committee approved the Transaction Structure and decided to offer outright sale of 51% to 100% share capital in each DISCO along with management control, subject to Cabinet approval.

DPM/FM noted that the initiative is intended to strengthen service delivery, ensure reliable electricity supply, and bring private sector efficiency into the sector.

The meeting was attended by the Federal Minister for Power, Advisor on Privatisation, SAPM Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Cabinet, Secretary Privatisation Commission, Secretary Privatisation Division, Secretary Power Division, Chairman NEPRA, Chairman SECP, and senior officials from relevant ministries and departments.

Govt. will not tolerate threats to sovereignty: Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry



By City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that strict action would be taken against anyone found supporting or facilitating terrorist activities, adding that the state remained committed to maintaining peace and would not tolerate any threat to its sovereignty.

Responding to a point of order in the National Assembly on Friday, he

reaffirmed the government's stance against militancy, stating that the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) was an internationally designated terrorist organization and would be dealt with firmly.

He corrected the record regarding recent incidents involving the Coast Guard reported in the media, saying that a week ago, Coast Guard personnel were martyred in a firing incident. Despite the loss, he added, the forces exercised restraint and patience.

PTI founder being provided best available medical treatment in Pakistan: Rana Sanaullah

By City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Adviser on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Friday apprised the Senate that PTI founder and his spouse Bushra Bibi were being provided the best available medical treatment in Pakistan, while meetings in jail were being regulated under court-approved procedures.

Responding to points raised by the leader of the opposition and other lawmakers in the Senate, Rana Sanaullah said political parties should remain within democratic and peaceful boundaries and avoid actions that could create instability in the country.



He said the events of May 9 were attacks on national institutions, adding that such actions carried serious consequences.

Rana Sanaullah said that repeated attempts to march on the capital and confront the state had further complicated the political environment.

Jawad Dogar gets additional charge of DG National Forensic Agency

By News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Police Service Grade 21 officer Jawad Ahmed Dogar has been given an additional charge of DG National Forensic Agency. Jawad Dogar is also the National

Coordinator of NACTA.

Following the decision of the Board of Governors of the Forensic Agency, the Interior Ministry has issued a notification for the additional posting of Jawad Dogar.