



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
جرین عبد اللہ کل شری اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے جینا اور اس کے دن فرمایا لوگوں کو خاموش کر دو (پھر فرمایا) تم میرے بعد کافر نہیں بناؤ گے تم میں سے بعض بعض کی گردن ہارنے لگے۔ اس حدیث کی روایت ابو بکر اور ابن عباس رضی اللہ عنہم نے نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم سے کی ہے۔
(بیگناری: حدیث نمبر 6869)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Jamaat-i-Islami Emir challenges petroleum levy in court

Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has moved the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) against the petroleum levy, arguing the government had effectively granted itself unrestricted power to tax citizens through executive notifications without parliamentary oversight.



Israeli military arrests Pakistani philanthropist Saad Edhi, others

Israeli military has detained Saad Edhi, son of prominent Pakistani philanthropist Faisal Edhi, and dozens of others who were part of Global Sumud Flotilla consisting of 500 volunteers from several countries carrying aid for Palestinians of Gaza. Saad Edhi had joined more than 500 volunteers from several countries in the flotilla which had set off for Gaza from Marmaris, Turkey.

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PSDP meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding PSDP on Monday.



Photo: Online

Water, hydel power top Pakistan's development budget priorities: PM

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on the current year's Public Sector Development Programme and proposed allocations for the next fiscal year.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed that water storage and hydroelectric power projects be treated as the leading priorities in development budget allocations, warning that public funds will only be committed to projects with assured outcomes.

Chairing a review meeting on the current year's Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) and proposed allocations for the

next fiscal year, the PM said better-performing ministries would receive development funds on a priority basis.

He also urged maximum encouragement of public-private partnerships in development projects.

The meeting was briefed on progress across major national water and hydro-power initiatives, including the Dasu, Diamer-Bhasha, and Mohmand Dam projects.

Sharif praised Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb for the successful issuance of Panda Bonds and their positive reception in international markets. He also commended the performance of the Railways, IT, and Power ministries during the session.

Pakistan condemns drone attack on UAE nuclear plant



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday strongly condemned the drone attack on the Barakah Nuclear Plant in the United Arab Emirates, expressing full solidarity with the UAE government and people.

In a statement, the Foreign Office described the targeting of nuclear facilities as a "grave violation" of international law, including the United Nations Charter, international humanitarian law, and the principles of nuclear safety set by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

It stressed that nuclear installations must never be attacked,

warning that such actions carry "potentially catastrophic and irreversible consequences" for human life, the environment, and regional and global security.

Pakistan emphasised that civilian nuclear infrastructure is inviolable under international norms and called on all parties to exercise maximum restraint, adhere to international obligations, and avoid actions that could escalate tensions beyond the region.

The statement underscored that dialogue and diplomacy, in line with the United Nations Charter, remain the only viable route to lasting peace, stability, and de-escalation in the Gulf region.

Fazl warns of rising insecurity, calls for constitutional supremacy and democratic dialogue

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Maulana Fazlur Rehman Monday said the country is passing through a serious phase marked by rising insecurity, political instability, and economic hardship, and called for renewed commitment to constitutional supremacy and democratic dialogue.

Addressing a "Meet the Press" session in Karachi, the JUI-F chief said the law and order situation is deteriorating, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, where, he claimed, conditions resemble rebellion, with armed elements challenging the writ of the state. He added that in parts of interior Sindh, criminal networks are operating with impunity.

Fazlur Rehman criticised the ruling authorities for what he described as a lack of seriousness in addressing both security and economic challenges.

He alleged that undue influence over



parliament and government has weakened democratic institutions and warned that disrespect for parliament and the constitution undermines the federation.

He said the public is burdened by inflation and has grown frustrated with the

prevailing conditions.

Stressing the importance of the people's mandate, he questioned whether the current parliament truly represents the public will and emphasized that national decisions should reflect the principle of

consultation (Shura) in Islam rather than the will of a single authority.

Referring to past political developments, he said political parties had worked together during the passage of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan to restore the constitution to its original spirit through parliamentary consensus.

He urged that parliamentary decisions should not be undermined and said dialogue within the constitutional framework is the only viable path forward, dismissing any notion of dismantling the system.

On regional matters, Fazlur Rehman said Pakistan has an important role to play in easing tensions related to Iran-US relations and highlighted the need for constructive engagement with neighboring Afghanistan. He noted that Pashtun populations live on both sides of the Durand Line and said both countries are interconnected and indispensable to each other.

Nawaz Sharif reviews Lahore projects



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif departed for Jati Umra after spending more than four hours at 90 Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam, the Chief Minister's House in Lahore.

According to sources, Nawaz Sharif chaired a meeting regarding development projects launched under the Lahore development initiative.

Officials briefed him on the progress of various projects being carried out in phases across the city. Sources said Nawaz Sharif closely reviewed the pace of work on the ongoing development schemes.

The meeting was informed about restoration projects related to Neela Gumbad, Data Darbar Complex, Circular Road, the Walled City area and Mochi Gate along with other historic sites.

Representatives from the Lahore Development Authority (LDA), Traffic Engineering and Planning Agency (TEPA), district administration and Metropolitan Corporation, along with project directors, attended the meeting.

Nawaz Sharif also held meetings with various party leaders during his visit.

Mohsin Naqvi holds high-level talks in Tehran seeking restoration of Iran-US dialogue

Spokesman Report

TEHRAN: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi spent third consecutive day in Tehran amid the stalled Iran-US peace talks.

According to sources, Naqvi is in Iran while playing key role regarding the restoration of US-Iran negotiations.

Interior Minister Naqvi held meetings with senior figures in Tehran again today and is expected to meet more high-ranking officials. It is worth mentioning that Mohsin Naqvi has already met with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni.

Earlier, President Pezeshkian praised Pakistan's role in efforts aimed at achieving a ceasefire in the war imposed on Iran on February 28.

According to Iran's state news agency, President Pezeshkian praised Pakistan's role in efforts aimed at achieving a cease-



fire and commended the contributions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir.

He expressed hope that Pakistan's diplomatic efforts would play an important role in establishing lasting peace in the region.

The Iranian president said that Iran seeks sincere and stable relations with Islamic countries in the region, adding that unity among Muslim nations could reduce the chances of interference by external powers. He emphasized that coordination and solidarity among Islamic countries could form the foundation for durable peace and stability.

Heatwave alert issued across Pakistan from 19 to 26 May

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a nationwide alert warning of an intensifying heatwave expected to persist from 19 to 26 May, with temperatures likely to exceed 42°C in several regions.

According to the NDMA's National Emergencies Operation Centre, southern parts of the country—including Sindh, southern Punjab and eastern Balochistan—are expected to experience extreme heat conditions over the coming days.

In Punjab, cities such as Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Lahore are forecast to face severe heatwave conditions. Similarly, in Karachi and other parts of Sindh—including Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana and Tharparkar—temperatures

are expected to rise sharply, increasing the risk of heat-related illnesses. Several districts in Balochistan, including Turbat, Sibi and Lasbela, are also likely to be affected by the intense heatwave, with authorities urging residents to take precautionary measures.

The NDMA warned that the sharp rise in temperatures could pose serious health risks, particularly for children, the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions. Citizens have been advised to avoid unnecessary outdoor activities during peak sunlight hours, stay hydrated and take steps to prevent dehydration.

AJK Prime Minister hails lawyers as backbone of justice system in Rawalpindi address



Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that the legal fraternity serves as the backbone of the justice system and plays a vital role in upholding the supremacy of the Constitution and rule of law.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony at the District Bar Association Rawalpindi. Addressing the gathering, the prime minister said lawyers had rendered invaluable services for the protection of democratic traditions and constitutional rights in every era. "The lawyers' role is indispensable in ensuring social justice, protection of constitutional rights, and strengthening the rule of law," he added. He said the Azad Kashmir govern-

ment was implementing reforms aimed at promoting good governance, transparency, and institutional stability in the region. He reiterated that provision of speedy and affordable justice to the people remained one of the government's foremost priorities. Referring to the welfare of lawyers, PM Rathore said although official funds could not be allocated from

outside the state, he would personally extend financial support in recognition of the efforts of District Bar President Sardar Malik Sajid Awan for the lawyers' community. The ceremony was also addressed by Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, High Court Bar Association President Saeed Yousuf Advocate, District Bar Association President Sardar Malik Sajid Awan Advocate, and several others.

Amir Muqam Honors Spiritual Leaders at Shrine Visits in Kashmir



Bureau Report

MIRPUR.: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and Saffron Engineer Amir Muqam visited the shrines of the great spiritual leader of the subcontinent, Hazrat Baba Peera Shah Ghazi, also known as Damri Wali Sarkar, and Arif Khari Hazrat Mian Muhammad Baksh and prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the religious leaders. On this occasion, former Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan, former Senior Minister Malik Muhammad Nawaz Khan, former government ministers Chaudhry Rukhsar Ahmed, Syed Shaikat Ali Shah, Assembly candidates Raja Riyat Khan, Raja Fateh Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Razaq, former advisor Colonel Muhammad Maroof, Chairman Red Crescent Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Ijaz Raza, District President Muslim League-N Chaudhry Javed Qadir, Raja Muneeb Thakur, Malik Sohail Awan, Sardar Tariq and other people were also present. Earlier, when Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam reached Khari Sharif, he was welcomed along with the drum band bajas.

AJK Election Commission Debunks Delimitation Rumors for 2026 Polls

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission refuted social media rumors regarding changes to the final delimitation for the 2026 Legislative Assembly general elections in areas like Rawalakot, Hajira, Tarakhal, Muzaffarabad, Leepa, Chakar, Hattian, and Khoi Ratta. The Commission clarified that the delimitation remains the same as in the 2021 general elections, after it processed and rejected objections/suggestions submitted following the initial interim delimitation proposals. Furthermore, the Commission denied circulating any advertisement for job appointments, stating that the one circulating online is from 2018. The public and media are urged to disregard unconfirmed news and rely solely on official Election Commission announcements for accurate information.



Punjab Government reconstitutes Quran Board to ensure authentic holy book publication

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Secretary Auqaf & Religious Affairs Punjab, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, announced the reconstitution of the Punjab Quran Board for three years, underscoring the Punjab Government's commitment to preserving the sanctity and authentic publication of the Holy Quran according to legal, constitutional, and religious principles. The new Board, approved by the Chief Minister and Provincial Cabinet under the Punjab Holy Quran (Printing & Recording) Rules, 2011, aims to foster religious harmony by including eminent scholars from all major schools of thought. Renowned scholar Maulana Zubair Hassan has been appointed Chairman for one year. Dr. Bhutta emphasized the Board's crucial role in supervising Quranic printing and recording, offering scholarly and legal guidance, and strengthening institutions that safeguard the Quran's sanctity and promote unity. The notification details the diverse membership, which spans three years, including representatives from the Bareilvi (Dr. Muhammad Kareem Khan, Saeed Ahmad Shah Gujrati, etc.), Deobandi (including Chairman Maulana Zubair Hassan, Qari Ahmad Mian Thanvi, etc.), Ahl-e-Hadees (Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Rashid, Dr. Allama Syed Zia Ullah Shah Bukhari, etc.), and Ahl-e-Tashee schools (Dr. Allama Muhammad Hussain Akbar, Allama Afzal Haideri, etc.). The Board also includes Volunteer Members (Mian Muhammad Rasheed, Sheikh Muhammad Nazim ud Din, etc.) and several Official Members from departments like Home, Information Culture & Youth Affairs, School Education, Police, and Auqaf & Religious Affairs.



Protest

LAHORE: Activists of Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML) hold a protest against petrol prices in front of US Consulate in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

PPP AJK Chief slams India after Indus Waters Treaty arbitration win

Spokesman Report

MANDI BAHAUDDIN: President Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin has said that the decision of the International Court of Arbitration in favor of Pakistan on the Indus Waters Treaty is not another success for Pakistan and India is once again facing humiliation and disgrace.



Now India has neither the moral nor the legal justification to unilaterally suspend the Indus Waters Treaty. This is a complete violation of international laws. He expressed these views while talking to Aqib Chaudhry's residence in Mandi Bahauddin.

He said that if the treaties start being violated in this way, then it will become difficult for the world system to function. However, Indian measures will

endanger the peace of the region. He said that the guarantor of this treaty is the World Bank. But this is not 71, it is 2026 and the head of the Pakistani armed forces is Field Marshal Chief of

Defense Forces General Asim Munir, so India should not create problems for itself. He said that India will have to implement the agreement at all costs.

Muslim Conference Gains Strength: Hundreds Join as Sardar Attique Visits Neelum Valley

City Desk.

NEELU VELLY: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan visited Upper Neelum, received warmly welcomed, hundreds of people joined the Muslim Conference, Abid Andleeb Afzal Butt carried a heavy burden, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan welcomed the participants by garlanding them, along with the President of the Muslim Conference, Chairman Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan, President of Muslim Conference District Neelum and former Minister of State



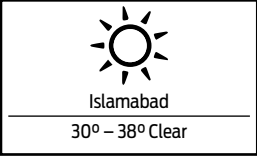
Shamim Ali Malik, Chairperson of the Girls Wing Maimuna Kiani Advocate, Kifayatullah Usmani, Commander Shafiq, Sikandar Habib Mir and a large number of other workers were present, upon reaching

Nagdar, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan was warmly welcomed under the leadership of Abid Andleeb Butt, the new participants will be given their rightful place, the Muslim Conference is a party of martyrs and

martyrs and the people of the state are its heirs, we are grateful to all communities who joined the Muslim Conference, the Muslim Conference is a bouquet of all communities, those who joined the Muslim Conference

I am Syed Maroof Shah, Syed Muharram Shah, Sheikh Abdul Rashid, Sheikh Suleman, Syed Khurshheed Shah, Syed Shakoor Shah, Syed Ilyas Shah, Naeem Akbar Lone, Akhtar Lone, Syed Shafiq Shah, Suleman Mir, Syed Mubashir Shah, Saber Sheikh, Syed Iqbal Shah, Ijaz Kazmi, Syed Ijaz Shah, Luqman Mir, Syed Qasim Shah, Syed Shujaat Shah, Suleman Sheikh, Syed Mofar Hussain Shah, Syed Tawfiq Shah, Yasir Mughal,

Syed Maqsood Shah, Syed Sibtain Hussain Shah, Mustafa Sheikh, Syed Sajjad Shah, Hafiz Gulfaam Sheikh, Syed Sadiq Shah, Syed Bilal Shah, Syed Abrar Shah, Musheeb Tabassum, Syed Akash Shah, Majid Sheikh, Syed Adnan Shah, Syed Saim Shah, Syed Waqas Shah, Syed Naveed Shah son of Shaikat Shah Nagdar son of Shaikat Shah Nagdar, Ghafoor, Akhtar Sheikh, Aftab, Malik Naseer, Nazir Sheikh, Mush-taq Sheikh, Waqar Rana, Tariq, Shakir, Imran Mir, Shams Mir, Syed Junaid Shah, Ali Mir and others left Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Pakistan Peoples Party and PML-N and joined.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:289 am
Zohr 12:04 pm
Asr 4:59 pm
Maghrib 7:04 pm
Isha 8:41 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

Pakistan's 46-month high trade deficit signals urgent need for export-led reforms: Mian Zahid Hussain

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, a prominent Pakistani business leader, expressed severe concern over the nation's worsening economic situation, highlighted by a near four-year high trade deficit of over \$4 billion in April 2026.

This surge is predominantly due to a 28% month-on-month increase in the import bill to \$6.55 billion, largely driven

by tripled energy import costs resulting from global oil shocks and Middle East conflicts.

Conversely, exports remain insufficient, growing only marginally to \$2.48 billion in April 2026. Consequently, the cumulative trade deficit for the first ten months of FY26 widened by over 20% to \$31.98 billion.

Hussain noted that waning commodity prices and heightened regional competition further pres-

sured export revenues, contributing to a growing current account deficit.

He also warned that foreign remittances are threatened by geopolitical tensions and the expulsion of Pakistani workers from the Gulf, potentially jeopardizing a crucial \$2.5 to \$3.5 billion monthly inflow. Given vulnerable foreign exchange reserves and rising debt servicing costs,

Hussain stressed that the 3.5% growth projection is at risk without immediate,



Photo: PID

initiating energy security via renewable energy transition to cut oil imports, offering direct incentives for value-added export sectors (like textiles), aggressively seeking new markets in Central Asia and Africa, and establishing a high-level task force for debt negotiation and worker protection abroad.

He concluded that moving to an export-led growth model and lowering business costs are essential to escape the current cycle of deficits and debt.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday.



Photo: PID

Alleged Viral Video of Guest House on Auto Bhan Road Latifabad Raises Public Concern

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: A wave of concern has emerged among citizens after an alleged video of a guest house on Auto Bhan Road, Latifabad, went viral on social media.

According to local residents, complaints have reportedly been raised regarding alleged immoral activities in some guest houses, which they believe are negatively affecting the social environment and raising concerns about the spread of diseases.

Health experts state that unsafe and irresponsible practices may increase the risk of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, syphilis, and other sexually transmitted infections, which can pose serious threats to human health.

Residents have urged the district administration and police to immediately investigate such alleged locations and take legal action in accordance with the law to protect society and the younger generation from potential harmful impacts.

3rd batch of OIC COMSTECH-Ida Rieu special education training programme begins

The third batch of the COMSTECH-Ida Rieu Special Teachers Training Programme commenced in Karachi, a joint effort to enhance inclusive and special education capacity within OIC member states. Organized by the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) and the Ida Rieu Welfare Association, the program trains professionals in special education and support services for persons with disabilities. This batch includes 12 trainees from Nigeria, The Gambia, and Uganda, following two previous batches that trained 15 participants. COMSTECH Coordinator General Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary emphasized that inclusive education and professional training are crucial for improving opportunities and social participation for persons with disabilities across OIC nations, highlighting the vital role of capacity-building in empowering communities and improving educational access. He reaffirmed COMSTECH's dedication to



promoting educational cooperation, HR development, and social inclusion through targeted programs. Prof. Choudhary also commended Dr. Nadira Panjwani, President of Ida Rieu Welfare Association, for her extensive contri-

butions to special education and community welfare. Dr. Nadira Panjwani welcomed the international participants, praised COMSTECH's commitment to inclusive education initiatives, and affirmed Ida Rieu's dedication to accessibility and empow-

erment through ongoing cooperation. The training curriculum incorporates practical teaching methodologies, assistive learning approaches, and specialized capacity-building sessions for teachers working with children with disabilities.

Murtaza Qizilbash Brings Lahore's Stories to the Forefront as Spotify RADAR Pakistan Artist for Q2 2026



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Murtaza Qizilbash is Spotify's RADAR Pakistan Artist for Q2 2026, highlighted for blending Lahore's heritage with modern sound. His listenership has surged over 130% since April. Qizilbash draws inspiration from his ancestral home, Mubarak Haveli, explored in a featured mini-docuseries. Tracks like «Hum» and «Bhool» are gaining traction, and his collaboration «Har Baar» is charting high. His music resonates globally, particularly with Gen Z audiences (50%+ under 25). Spotify supports his poetic artistry, which includes being added to over 200K user playlists, continuing the legacy of past RADAR alumni.

Industry-Academia Nexus Conference Lauded by Chaudhry Nasir Ali Zia

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Chaudhry Nasir Ali Zia has said that he appreciates the efforts of the Vice Chancellor and the administration of Government College University Faisalabad for organizing a wonderful conference on Industry-Academia Nexus.

Such initiatives are truly the need of the hour to bridge the gap between academic learning and industrial requirements, which enable our upcoming professionals to align their knowledge, skills and competencies with the growing demands of the market. He further said that strengthening collaboration between educational institutions and industry is essential for innovation, employment and sustainable national development.

Role of mother is foundation of any nation, says Ch Naeem

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Health and Population Welfare Officer Toba Tek Singh, Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem, stated that an aware, healthy, and educated mother is crucial for a bright generation, as mothers are foundational to a nation through their love, upbringing, sacrifice, and character building. He emphasized that the mother's role is the cornerstone of any nation, requiring society to prioritize women's physical, mental, and social well-being for a healthy society.



The Punjab government, through the Health and Population Welfare Departments, supports programs focusing on women's and maternal health, family planning, child care, and nutrition. Naeem stressed that a mother's good health secures better growth and a brighter future for children, urging the public to utilize government maternal and child health facilities to build healthy families and a prosperous society. He concluded that respecting, educating, and providing better healthcare to women is a collective societal duty for ensuring a safe, healthy, and bright future for coming generations.

SECP Issues Digital Finance Licenses, Reduces Licensing Backlog

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD, MAY 18: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan has taken major steps to promote innovation and digital transformation in Pakistan's financial sector by issuing the country's first Shariah-compliant digital general takaful operator license to First Digital Takaful Company Limited and the first Digital Investment Advisory Services license to Wealthbridge Management Limited.

The SECP also licensed Punjab Life Insurance Limited as Pakistan's first provincial government-owned life insurance company for the Punjab Health Initiative Program.

During the last three months, since the new management took charge, the SECP has significantly reduced the



pending application backlog despite operational challenges. The Commission had 729 outstanding licensing applications, while another 414 fresh applications were received during the period, taking the total caseload to

1,143 applications.

Out of these, 510 applications were disposed of, reducing the pending cases to 633. The disposed applications included 84 license applications, 20 prior permissions, 53 approvals for

Boards of Directors and CEOs, 264 license renewals, seven share transfer cases, and 45 other approvals, while 37 cases were closed due to withdrawal, lack of response from applicants, or non-fulfillment of regulatory requirements.

As part of these reforms, the cumbersome requirement of prior security clearance for foreign individuals applying for licenses is being removed. The SECP is also rationalizing documentary requirements for Section 42 companies to facilitate the non-profit sector and improve the incorporation process.

The reforms are part of the SECP's broader strategy to modernize Pakistan's financial regulatory framework, facilitate innovation, encourage foreign participation, and strengthen digital regulatory infrastructure.

Main Suspect in Kashif Baghi Murder Case Still at Large, Arrested Accused Sent Back on Police Remand

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The main suspect in the two-month-old murder of Pakistan Peoples Party Shaheed Bhutto leader Kashif Baghi remains at large. The murder occurred in a Qasimabad, Hyderabad flat. Hyderabad police have not arrested the prime accused, Waleed Farooqi. Meanwhile, an arrested suspect, Afaq Builder, who was apprehended in Islamabad, was brought before the Fourth Judicial Magistrate in Hyderabad. Despite defense arguments for jail custody, the court granted the police's request for an additional four-day physical remand for further interrogation. The deceased's elder brother, Asif Qaimkhan, criticized the police for failing to arrest Farooqi and alleged that Afaq Builder was being treated leniently, suggesting bribery was hindering a proper investigation and potentially weakening the case. A special investigation committee, headed by DSP Nazeer Mallah, was formed but has also been unsuccessful in locating the prime suspect after two months.



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Israel and the US Retreat as Iran Emerges Victorious

In a stunning admission that has reshaped the geopolitical narrative of the Middle East, President Donald Trump and U. S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth effectively acknowledged the end of America's direct military campaign against Iran. Declaring that "Epic Fury" had ended for all practical purposes and that "Operation Freedom" was now in effect, the United States quietly shifted from aggressive military confrontation to strategic disengagement.

Yet the most revealing statement came from Secretary Hegseth himself, who openly stated that the United States no longer considered the Strait of Hormuz its responsibility because America was not dependent on the waterway for its energy needs. According to Hegseth, those nations suffering from the closure of Hormuz should themselves use whatever diplomatic or military tools they possess to reopen the route.

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

Before the war, the Strait of Hormuz functioned as one of the world's most critical energy arteries, carrying nearly

20 percent of global oil shipments and a substantial portion of liquefied natural gas exports. The closure and militarization of the region following the conflict sent shockwaves through the global economy. Oil prices surged beyond \$140 per barrel at several points during the crisis, while shipping insurance premiums multiplied several times over. Freight costs skyrocketed, disrupting global trade routes from Asia to Europe and Africa. What began as a military operation against Iran evolved into a worldwide economic earthquake affecting virtually every continent.

Asia bore some of the heaviest economic consequences. China, India, Japan, South Korea, Pakistan, and many Southeast Asian economies depend heavily on Gulf energy supplies. The disruption in oil shipments dramatically increased manufacturing costs, transportation expenses, and inflation across the region. China reportedly absorbed economic losses exceeding \$400 billion through disrupted supply chains, higher energy costs, and slowing exports. India, already struggling with inflationary pressure, saw fuel prices surge and industrial growth slow sharply. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and other developing Asian economies faced intensified economic distress as energy imports became unaffordable.

Millions of vulnerable households across Asia were pushed deeper into poverty due to rising food, electricity, and transportation prices.

Europe also paid a heavy price for the war. Already weakened by years of economic slowdown, energy insecurity, and the lingering consequences of the Ukraine conflict, European economies suffered severe inflationary pressure from rising oil and gas prices. Germany's industrial sector, heavily dependent on stable energy costs, experienced declining production. France, Italy, and Spain faced rising transportation and manufacturing expenses. Analysts estimated

Europe's direct and indirect war-related economic losses in the range of \$350 to \$500 billion through reduced growth, inflation, trade disruption, and financial instability. European stock markets experienced repeated volatility as investors feared prolonged instability in the Middle East.

Africa, despite having no involvement in the war itself, became one of its greatest humanitarian victims. Many African nations rely heavily on imported fuel and food. The spike in shipping and energy prices sharply increased the cost of basic necessities. Countries already struggling with debt, unemployment, and food insecurity faced worsening humanitarian

crises. Transportation costs surged across East and West Africa, while inflation reduced purchasing power for millions of ordinary citizens. International aid agencies warned that the war indirectly pushed millions more people below the poverty line across Africa.

South America similarly experienced major economic disruption. Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and other economies dependent on global commodity markets suffered from rising shipping costs, weakening trade flows, and market uncertainty. Airlines across Latin America struggled with increased jet fuel prices, while agricultural exports became more expensive to transport. Currency volatility intensified as investors shifted toward safe-haven assets amid fears of broader global instability.

Even the United States itself suffered enormous economic consequences. While Washington argued that it was less dependent on Gulf oil, the integrated nature of the global economy meant that rising energy costs affected all Americans. Gasoline prices climbed sharply, mortgage rates remained elevated, airline costs increased, and supply chains faced renewed disruption. U. S. military expenditures surged into hundreds of billions of dollars as naval deployments, missile defense systems, logistics operations, and regional base protection consumed vast financial resources. The Congressional Budget Office and independent analysts estimated that the

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Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Hormuz Hotspot: Shifting US Policy and Global Powers Reshape the Iran Standoff

The ongoing war against Iran has now entered a phase where the initial excitement and rapid military strategies have been replaced by standstill, fatigue and strategic confusion, with claims of immediate success seeming to fade away.

This situation is becoming increasingly complex for the United States day by day. Disagreements within the NATO alliance are also becoming apparent, as opinions are becoming divided on the continuation and strategy of this war. President Donald Trump is facing mounting domestic political pressure, public unease and increasing criticism over war expenses. Differences within the Pentagon and changes in senior military leadership signal that there is no longer unity in decision-making, while the growing public fatigue for war indicates that this conflict is becoming a burden for Washington. When cracks start to appear in command structures during a war, it signifies not only a military crisis but also a political one.

The initial estimation was that modern technology, air superiority and the "Shock and Awe" strategy (a modern military theory aimed at incapacitating the enemy with sudden, overwhelming force) would quickly subdue Iran, but the ground reality turned out to be contrary. Iran not only maintained its defensive capabilities but also established itself as a strong party through a well-organized and effective counter-strategy. Missile and drone attacks have not only proven its retaliatory capability but have also shifted the balance of power in the region. Meanwhile, as the second round of negotiations between Iran and the United States intensifies over the escalating dispute regarding the nuclear program, discussions about extending the ceasefire and the continual U-turns in Donald Trump's statements contribute to a complex picture that is not easy to navigate.

A review of history shows that tensions between Tehran and Washington are long-standing, rooted in the 1979 Iranian Revolution that placed both nations in enduring opposition. The 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal briefly offered hope for normalization, but the US withdrawal under President Trump in 2018 again pushed relations into crisis. As new rounds of negotiations unfold, the central dispute remains Iran's nuclear program and the sanctions regime, while the Strait of Hormuz—vital to global oil and trade flows—has emerged as the most sensitive flashpoint. Iran's firm stance and countermeasures against a potential US blockade have sent warning signals to global markets, with any disruption in this corridor likely to trigger worldwide economic and energy shocks.

Trump's shifting statements have further deepened uncertainty and added volatility to US policy. Rising tensions in this strategic passage have also unsettled the international community, with even America's close allies showing reluctance to fully endorse escalation, reflecting growing war fatigue across diplomatic circles. Meanwhile, Russia and China have played quiet but significant roles in shaping the narrative, with China—heavily dependent on energy flows through Hormuz—advocating regional stability and jointly proposing a five-point peace plan with Pakistan that has drawn international attention. Russia's use of veto power at the UN also signals its unwillingness to allow Iran's isolation, highlighting a broader divide in global alignments and reinforcing the emerging multipolar character of the conflict.



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

Bridging the Gap between School Learning & Real-World Application

Education has long been considered the backbone of national development, yet one of the most persistent challenges facing modern education systems is the disconnect between classroom learning and its practical application. In a developing country like Pakistan, this gap has far-reaching consequences, affecting not only individual career prospects but also the country's economic growth and social progress. Bridging this divide is essential to ensure that education equips students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence required to navigate real-world challenges.

Traditionally, education in Pakistan has been largely theoretical, with a strong emphasis on rote memorization and examination performance. Students are often trained to reproduce textbook knowledge rather than understand and apply it. While this approach may yield high grades, it does little to develop critical thinking, creativity, or problem-solving skills. As a result, many graduates find themselves unprepared for professional environments where practical competence is highly valued.

One of the key reasons behind this gap is the limited integration of experiential learning in schools. Classroom teaching frequently focuses on completing the syllabus within a fixed timeframe, leaving little room for practical engagement. Students rarely get opportunities to experiment, explore, or apply concepts to real-life situations. This lack of exposure weakens their ability to connect academic knowledge with everyday experiences.

To address this issue, education must shift toward a more application-oriented model.

Project-based learning offers a highly effective solution. By involving students in real-world problems and encouraging them to design solutions, schools can foster analytical thinking and innovation. For example, science students can undertake environmental projects such as water conservation or waste management, while business students can develop small entrepreneurial ventures. Such activities not only enhance understanding but also make learning meaningful and engaging.

Strengthening the link between education and industry is another crucial step. Schools and universities must collaborate with businesses, organizations, and professionals to provide internships, apprenticeships, and field exposure. These experiences allow students to observe workplace dynamics, understand professional expectations, and develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability. Early exposure to real-world environments also helps students make informed career choices.

In the context of Pakistan, promoting technical and vocational education is equally important. Skills-based training programs can provide hands-on experience in fields such as information technology, engineering, agriculture, and crafts. By valuing vocational education alongside academic pathways, the country can address unemployment and produce a workforce that is both skilled and productive.

Teachers play a central role in bridging this gap. They must move beyond traditional lecture-based methods and adopt interactive and student-centered approaches. Techniques such as case studies, simulations, group discussions, and problem-solving exercises

can help students connect theory with practice. Continuous professional development and teacher training programs are essential to equip educators with the skills required for modern teaching.

Assessment systems also require significant reform. The current focus on written examinations often discourages creativity and practical learning. Evaluations should include project work, presentations, and practical assignments that reflect students' ability to apply knowledge. Such an approach not only measures understanding more effectively but also motivates students to engage deeply with their subjects. Technology can play a transformative role in bridging the gap between learning and application. Digital platforms, virtual labs, and interactive tools provide students with opportunities to simulate real-world scenarios. Access to online resources enables learners to explore global knowledge, collaborate with peers, and develop digital skills essential for the modern workforce. However, efforts must be made to ensure that technological resources are accessible to students in both urban and rural areas.

Parental and societal attitudes also influence educational outcomes. In many cases, academic success is measured solely by grades and degrees, while practical skills are overlooked. There is a need to shift this mindset by recognizing the importance of holistic education. Awareness campaigns and career guidance programs can help parents and students appreciate the value of skill development and experiential learning.

Government policy plays a pivotal role in driving this transformation. Curriculum reforms must incorporate practical components across all subjects, ensuring that learning is relevant and applicable. Investment in infrastructure, teacher training, and partnerships

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Analysis

Dr. T. M. Malik

Voices Heard, Justice Delivered

In an era of eroding public trust in law enforcement, administrative reforms centered on transparency and citizen engagement have become indispensable instruments of democratic governance. Punjab's Khuli Kachehri initiative represents one such structural intervention — a deliberate effort to dismantle the barriers separating citizens from the institutions mandated to serve them. Launched under the public relief vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and spearheaded by Deputy Inspector General (Ops) Faisal Kamran, the program operationalizes participatory policing through direct, unmediated access to senior officers.

Over a span of two years, more than 41,662 grievances were registered and addressed through these open forums — a figure that testifies not merely to administrative capacity, but to the depth of unmet demand for accessible justice. In societies where procedural complexity and institutional opacity frequently deter citizens from pursuing legitimate complaints, the Khuli Kachehri model introduces a low-friction alternative: no intermediaries, no protracted queues, no labyrinthine paperwork. Complainants engage directly with decision-makers, and resolutions — where feasible — are issued on the spot.

DIG (Ops) Faisal Kamran presided over 493 sessions at his office, establishing an ethos of visible, senior-level accountability. This deliberate visibility matters. Research in public administration consistently demonstrates that institutional credibility is reinforced when leadership is not merely nominal but actively present in service delivery. Each session served as a real-time adjudication mechanism,

compressing timelines that would otherwise extend across weeks of bureaucratic processing.

The initiative's geographical and social outreach further distinguishes it from conventional complaint redress systems. Fifty-seven community-based sessions were conducted in mosques following Friday prayers — a strategically significant choice. By situating grievance forums within familiar, culturally resonant spaces, authorities reduced the psychological distance between citizens and the state. For individuals deterred by formal institutional settings — whether due to social marginalization, linguistic barriers, or historical mistrust — this model of proximate governance offered a meaningful point of entry.

Public reception has been largely affirmative. Official data indicate that approximately 87 percent of participants expressed satisfaction with their hearing outcomes, citing timeliness and procedural transparency as the primary drivers. While such metrics warrant contextual interpretation — administrative self-reporting carries inherent limitations — the scale and consistency of positive feedback nonetheless signal a measurable shift in public perception. In policing environments where scepticism is deeply ingrained, sustained engagement of this nature constitutes a form of reputational capital that is difficult to create and easy to squander.

A particularly consequential dimension of the initiative is its emphasis on internal accountability. A total of 5,184 policemen faced disciplinary action for misconduct, dereliction of duty, or abuse of authority. This figure is significant not only in magnitude but in institutional

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Analysis

Muneeb Ahmad

IS The Investment System in Algeria

More than 20,000 projects worth nearly \$70 billion

- The Single Window: A Key to Modernizing the Investment System:

The Algerian government announced a new regulatory phase for the investment system, reducing processing time for investor files to 15 days as a general rule, and 20 days for classified establishments. The Algerian Investment Development Agency (ADIA) is now obligated to respond to requests for economic real estate within 48 hours of its board's decision. This step aims to eliminate procedural delays, unify administrative channels, and accelerate the transformation of registered projects into actual productive activity.

These directives were outlined in a speech by Prime Minister Sifi Gharib during the opening of a media day on the new legal provisions governing the Single Window for Investment. The government presented the reform as a shift from a fragmented administrative approach to an integrated, results-oriented system, and from a limited intermediary window to a single, effective point of contact with the authority to process, sign, and make decisions in favor of the investor.

- The figures presented by the Prime Minister reveal the scale of

the economic stakes associated with this reform. The Algerian Investment Promotion Agency has registered more than 20,000 investment projects since the previous legislation came into effect in 2022, with a total declared value of approximately \$67.5 billion, and projections indicating the creation of more than 525,000 jobs. Thus, the issue is no longer simply a matter of limited administrative improvement, but rather a recalibration of one of the most important drivers of non-hydrocarbon economic growth, at a time when Algeria is seeking to broaden its production base, deepen its industrialization, and increase the contribution of private and productive investment to wealth creation.

- Broad powers for the Algerian Investment Promotion Agency:

The new reform is based on addressing the root causes of the problem by making the Algerian Investment Promotion Agency the sole and exclusive point of contact for investors. Representatives of various departments within the one-stop shops will no longer be mere intermediaries transferring files to their respective departments, but will instead become fully empowered



Algerian Prime Minister Sifi Gharib

decision-makers with the authority to investigate, process, sign, and issue the necessary documents and licenses all in one location. The reform also restructures the role of the one-stop shop, transforming it into a comprehensive platform covering all stages of a project's lifecycle, from legal establishment to actual operation.

Regarding the real estate sector, the Prime Minister explained that

the terms and conditions were also updated to ensure closer monitoring of investors' commitments and project completion phases. Consequently, granting affordable land is no longer a mere

administrative procedure but has become a tool for guiding investment towards the state's strategic priorities. Furthermore, the agency's obligation to respond to investors within

48 hours of the board's decision eliminates the waiting and uncertainty that previously hampered project design, financing, and scheduling.

In the area of urban development, the new regulations have expanded the responsibilities of the Algerian Investment Development Agency's one-stop shops to include processing and issuing urban planning permit applications, including building permits and certificates of conformity. This means that investors will have a unified process from the initial permit application to project completion, instead of multiple points of contact and fragmented responsibilities across different agencies.

The reform also includes a significant simplification of administrative procedures by expanding the use of digitalization as the preferred method of communication between investors and the administration. This is not simply a superficial modernization but a mechanism for improving tracking, enhancing transparency, reducing bureaucratic friction, and ensuring precise knowledge of the progress of each file and the entity responsible for its processing.

- Algeria, a Leading Business Hub with

Significant Guarantees and Advantages:

This transformation comes within a highly competitive international economic context, where investment attractiveness is no longer measured solely by the availability of natural resources or low costs, but also by the quality of the regulatory framework, the stability of rules, the speed of decision-making, and the clarity of responsibilities. Therefore, through these legislations, Algeria aims to improve its position in attracting productive investments and enhance the integration of its institutions into regional and international value chains, while ensuring that a larger share of the added value remains within the national economy.

Prime Minister Sifi Gharib emphasized that the Investment Law has strengthened legal protections for investors, while the new phase adds a second pillar: simplifying procedures. Thus, the government seeks to build an investment framework based on both legal protection and administrative efficiency, which constitutes one of the essential conditions for transforming Algeria into a land of initiative, attracting capital, and unleashing entrepreneurial potential.

Russia Offers Pakistani Students Medical and Nursing Exchange Opportunities

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistani students will be given opportunities to visit Russia and explore educational and medical centres. This will help them gain professional knowledge and valuable experience, especially in the field of medicine and nursing. The Deputy Consul, Director of Russian Centre for Science and Culture, Nikita Kosiakov expressed these views yesterday at the 3rd international Nursing Seminar organised by Ruffayda Hamdard College of Nursing, held at Bait-ul-Hikmah Auditorium, Madinat al-Hikmah. Ms. Sadia Rashid, Chancellor-Hamdard University presided over the proceedings. Mukhtiar Hussain Bhayo, Head of Office WHO, Sindh, was the chief guest.

Nikita Kosiakov said that through student exchange programmes, nursing students in Pakistan can learn



modern medical practices in Russia. He further added that the importance of Eastern medicine is also increasing. He expressed the hope that Russian students should also study and understand Unani medicine. He stated that the coming era belongs to Asia, and this can only be achieved through stronger cooperation among Asian

countries in the field of healthcare and education.

Mukhtiar Hussain Bhayo said Although nurses work tirelessly and sincerely, the appreciation they receive is still far below what they deserve. We need stronger campaigns, better funding, and more support for the nursing profession.

The first step is to increase the number of nurses. Since joining office, we have worked with government departments to prepare a new health policy for the next ten years. By next month, this policy will be presented with the support of universities and healthcare experts. At the same time, we are also finalising reforms in the

nursing workforce.

Ms Sadia Rashid in presidential address said This international seminar provides an excellent opportunity for scholarly discussion, research collaboration, and future-focused healthcare solutions. Such academic gatherings encourage critical thinking, professional develop-

ment, and innovative approaches to improving patient care and healthcare delivery.

To the students participating in today's Lamp Lighting Ceremony, remember that this ceremony is not merely symbolic. It represents your commitment to humanity, patient care, professional integrity, ethical nursing practice, sacrifice, lifelong learning, and compassionate service.

Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan paid glowing tribute to Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said for his iconic accomplishments. In the seminar, the Vice Chancellor of Hamdard University, Prof. Dr. Imran Amin, Prof. Dr. Yasmin Amarsi, Ruffayda Hamdard Nursing of College's Principal Aliya Nasir and others also spoke. Researchers from Malaysia and the United States joined online. A cake-cutting ceremony was held. The seminar concluded with Dua-e-Said.



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: University of Health Sciences Lahore Vice Chancellor Professor

Ahsan Waheed Rathore has urged young doctors to continue their services in the education, health and social sectors to reduce the problems faced

by the public in the health sector with full effort and dedication. He expressed these views while addressing the second convocation of Bakhtawar Amin Medi-

Convocation of Bakhtawar Amin Medical and Dental College Multan

cal and Dental College Multan yesterday. Professor Rashid Latif Khan, Professor Muhammad Sami Akhtar and Mian Muhammad Jamil were the chief guests. Professor Ahsan Waheed Rathore further said that the standard of post-graduation in the field of medicine in Pakistan is very high, however, if some doctors go abroad to study, then they should return and dedicate themselves to serving the country and the nation and bring glory to the name of the beloved homeland, parents and teachers. Chairman of the Board of Governors Kamran Rasool administered the oath to the young doctors. Speaking on the occasion, he said that they should use hard work, dedication, research and modern technolo-

gy to face the challenges faced by the people in the present era. The principal of the college Professor Saima Manzoor, while presenting a report on the achievements of the college, said that the students of the college are achieving outstanding positions in the university examinations. Discipline, punctuality and respect for teachers and parents are of fundamental importance in the college. Saad Mansoor expressed his determination in his speech that Bakhtawar Amin Trust Hospital will continue its services in various fields of public service. Professor Rashid Latif Khan and Professor Muhammad Sami Akhtar said that the students should serve in the health sector with hard work, honesty and sincerity and fulfill

the duty of leadership of the country and the nation in the future. They said that Pakistan is strong in terms of defense and the youth can play an important role in defending the homeland. The ceremony was also attended by Vice Principal Professor Aamir Ali Khan, Mian Mansoor Rashid, Mian Saud Rashid, Principal of CMH Medical College Professor Wajid Barki, Chief Executive Officer of Multan Medical and Dental College Imran Rasool, Professor Masood-ur-Rauf Hira, Mian Muhammad Alamgir and other guests. On this occasion, the special guest felicitated the students who achieved outstanding and distinguished positions. Medals and MBBS degrees were distributed.

PIEAS Open House and Career Fair 2026 concludes

City Desk

ISLAMABAD—MAY 18, 2026: The Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS), under the auspices of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), successfully concluded its Open House and Career Fair 2026.

The event brought together students, academia, industry leaders, national and international companies, and media representatives on a vibrant platform dedicated to promoting innovation, research, and professional development.

During the event, final-year students from various engineering and scientific disciplines presented more than 120 innovative projects. These projects focused on emerging technologies, research, creative problem-solving, and industrial applications, earning widespread appreciation from industry representatives



for their technical depth and practical relevance.

The fair also featured the participation of approximately 50 renowned national and international companies and organizations. This provided students with

valuable opportunities for professional networking, career guidance, internships, training, and future employment prospects, ultimately strengthening the vital linkages between academia and industry. The ceremony commenced

with the recitation of the Holy Quran followed by the national anthem. In her welcome address, Rector PIEAS, Dr. Anila Usman, described the capabilities of young engineers and scientists as a guarantee for Pakistan's bright future.



She emphasized that the PIEAS Open House and Career Fair 2026 perfectly reflected the talent, hard work, and innovative thinking of the students. Dr. Anila Usman further stated that PIEAS remains deeply committed to preparing

the youth to play an effective role in national progress through modern education, research, and technology. She noted that such institutional initiatives were vital for fostering sustainable collaboration with the industrial sector.

Participants and guests highly praised the event, recognizing it as an excellent milestone for the younger generation that successfully promotes innovation, professional growth, and industry-academia synergy.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
161,805.02	165,596.07	
Day's High	Day's Low	
164,939.08	161,613.51	
Index Value	Change	
14,485,265,309	-3791.05	
Percentage	Time	
-2.29%	18 May, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
10,323.75	+128.38	
Percentage	Time	
+1.26%	18 May, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
49,609.77	+83.60	
Percentage	Time	
+0.17%	18 May, 1:24 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
60,815.95	-593.34	
Percentage	Time	
-0.97%	18 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

FBR Showcases Reform Initiatives to Bangladesh Civil Service Delegation

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A 12-member delegation of senior Bangladesh Civil Services Administrative Cadre officers visited the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Headquarters in Islamabad as part of a 21-day study tour of Pakistan, focusing on Policy Innovation alongside Government System and Education Leadership.

Accompanied by the Director General of the Civil Services Academy (CSA), Mr. Farhan Aziz Khawaja, and faculty, the delegation was warmly welcomed by FBR Chairman, Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial. The Chairman emphasized the strong brotherly ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh, noting shared history and administrative legacies.

He stressed that reciprocal visits by civil servants strengthen bilateral relations through mutual learning and institutional cooperation. Langrial detailed significant FBR reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, efficiency, and performance, including measures against corruption and nepotism in postings, and the introduction of a modern performance evaluation system categorizing officers from A to D, noting that over 90% of officers in vital positions now fall under Categories A and B.



Senior officers from Pakistan Customs and the Inland Revenue Service (IRS) presented key initiatives under the FBR Transformation Plan, such as POS Integration, Compliance Risk Management, the Faceless Customs System to limit discretion, performance-linked competitive salaries, and

AI-based production monitoring.

The Bangladeshi delegation, led by Additional Secretary Ms. Salma Siddiqua Mahtab and including several Joint Secretaries, expressed appreciation for the FBR's governance structure, institutional capacity, and reform efforts, hoping to implement similar

reforms in Bangladesh.

The Director General CSA thanked the Chairman for the insightful session. The visit is anticipated to further bolster close Pakistan-Bangladesh relations via increased institutional collaboration and administrative experience exchange.

Called on

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



Photo: PID

CCP Approves CDC Investment in Collateral Management Firm

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the proposed investment by the Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDC) in Naymat Collateral Management Company Limited (NCMCL) following a Phase-I review conducted under the Competition Act, 2010.

CDC had submitted a pre-merger application to the Commission under Section 11 of the Act, seeking approval for the subscription of additional ordinary shares in NCMCL. Following a competition assessment, the Commission authorized the transaction, allowing CDC to acquire additional shareholding in the company.

CDC, established in 1993, is one of Pakistan's key capital market institutions, providing electronic custody of securities, settlement facilitation

and related depository services. NCMCL, incorporated in 2020, operates as a collateral management company responsible for warehouse oversight, verification and reporting services for commodities held as collateral.

NCMCL is currently the only collateral management company registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan for accreditation and oversight of warehouses operating under the country's Electronic Warehouse Receipt framework.

In its assessment, the Commission defined the relevant market as "collateral management and warehousing oversight services" within Pakistan. The Commission concluded that the deal would not significantly alter competition dynamics because the two companies operate in separate and unrelated business segments.

Pakistan Tops Asia-Pacific Risk Index as Mideast Conflict Strains Economy

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: S&P Global Market Intelligence names Pakistan as the Asia-Pacific economy at highest macro-financial stress risk amid a prolonged Middle East conflict. Projections show Pakistan's real GDP growth easing to 3.2% in FY2027, with downside risks amplified by high dependence on Gulf crude, GCC remittances, large external financing needs, and limited fiscal space. Economist Ahmad Mobeen notes that high dependence on regional energy/inputs, coupled with limited buffers, makes Pakistan vulnerable to acute shocks from elevated energy prices, which will worsen the current account, increase depreciation pressure, and sustain inflation. Future policy will face tough trade-offs between stability, growth, and IMF fiscal consolidation without new funding.

Malik Khuda Baksh Voices CNG Sector Concerns During SSGCL Revenue Requirement Review

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Malik Khuda Baksh, Chairman/President - CNG Station Owners Association of Pakistan, Chief Advisor - Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) and Convener FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Energy attended and addressed the Public Hearing on "SSGCL - Petition for Determination of Estimated Revenue Requirement for F. Y. 2026-27" held today at Pearl Continental Hotel Karachi.

During the hearing, Mr. Malik Khuda Baksh strongly represented the concerns of the CNG and Petroleum sector and high-



lighted key issues relating to unauthorized checking and inspection of petrol pumps, emphasizing that such actions must strictly remain within the legal framework of the relevant Weights & Measures laws and regulatory authorities.

OGRA officials carefully listened to the detailed speech and advised that formal written suggestions be submitted for further consideration. The important points raised by Mr. Malik Khuda Baksh were also incorporated into the official minutes of the meeting.

The hearing was attended by senior officials including Vice Chairman OGRA Shalazad Iqbal, Member Oil OGRA Zain Ul Abideen, Member Finance OGRA Shakeel Ahmed, renowned industrial leader Zubair Motiwala, MD SSGC, along with a large number of industrialists, petroleum dealers, and CNG station owners from across Pakistan.

PSW and NITB sign MoU to advance digital public services under DEEP

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a significant step toward accelerating Pakistan's digital transformation agenda, Pakistan Single Window (PSW) and the National Information Technology Board (NITB) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on the digitalization and integration of citizen-centric services under the Digital Economy Enhancement Project (DEEP).

Syed Aftab Haider, CEO of Pakistan Single Window, commented, "At PSW, our mission has always been

to build digital trust and eliminate the silos that restrict economic growth. Through this partnership with NITB under the DEEP project, we are taking the lessons learned from transforming international trade and applying them to the wider digital economy. By reinforcing our focus on interoperability and user-centric design, Faisal Mumtaz, Project Director from DEEP, also commented "This partnership reflects our shared commitment to building a connected and citizen-centric digital ecosystem in Pakistan."

Starlink in the Crosshairs: Civilian Deaths Expose Musk's Ethical Paradox

In modern warfare, the battlefield is no longer confined to trenches and tanks. It extends into the invisible realm of satellites, networks, and digital connectivity. The Russo-Ukraine war has become the first major conflict where commercial satellite internet has played a decisive role. Starlink, Elon Musk's constellation of satellites designed to connect humanity, now finds itself entangled in the machinery of war. Reports that drones using Starlink connectivity struck Russian territory on May 17, killing four civilians and injuring dozens, have ignited a profound ethical debate. How does this align with Musk's professed philosophy of advancing humanity and peaceful innovation?

When Russia targeted Ukraine's communications infrastructure in 2022, Starlink emerged as a lifeline. Thousands of terminals were rushed into the country, restoring connectivity for hospitals, government offices, and frontline units. What began as humanitarian assistance quickly evolved into a strategic military asset.

Ukrainian forces adapted Starlink for battlefield coordination and drone operations. By attaching terminals to drones, they enabled remote operation and precision targeting. Analysts estimate that drones now account for nearly 80 percent of battlefield damage, transforming the war into a dronedominated conflict. The ability to stream live video, adjust trajectories, and strike with accuracy has given Ukraine a technological edge.

The May 17 strikes that killed four civilians and injured dozens in Russia highlight the tragic consequences of this militarization. Starlink's connectivity, intended to bridge digital divides, has become a conduit for lethal force.

Elon Musk has repeatedly insisted that Starlink is a civilian system, not intended for offensive military use. He has emphasized neutrality, even restricting access in certain regions to prevent escalation. Yet the battlefield reality tells a different story. Once terminals are deployed, enforcement of "civilian-only" use becomes nearly impossible. The line between humanitarian

aid and military application dissolves, leaving civilians to pay the price.

When confronted by officials, Musk pointed to Starlink's terms of service, which prohibit offensive use. But this response rings hollow against the backdrop of civilian deaths. The disconnect between policy and practice exposes the limits of corporate disclaimers in the fog of war.

Elon Musk has cultivated an image as a visionary advancing humanity. Tesla seeks to accelerate the transition to sustainable energy. SpaceX dreams of colonizing Mars to ensure the survival of our species. Neuralink and The Boring Company promise futuristic solutions to human challenges.

Yet Starlink's role in enabling drone strikes reveals a stark contradiction. Musk speaks of advancing humanity through technology, yet his satellites are implicated in civilian deaths. He cham-

pions free speech and open access, yet Starlink has been selectively geofenced. He claims neutrality in conflicts, yet terminals are used by both Ukraine and Russia. He envisions peaceful colonization of Mars, yet his technology is amplifying destruction on Earth.

The juxtaposition is jarring: a man who speaks of humanity's destiny among the stars now finds his technology implicated in the deaths of civilians on Earth.

The ethical paradox of Starlink's militarization raises broader questions about the role of private corporations in war. Musk's companies present themselves as advancing civilization, yet Starlink's battlefield role undermines this narrative. The conflict demonstrates how a single commercial actor can influence military outcomes, raising accountability concerns. Who bears responsibility when private technology contributes directly to civilian

deaths?

The implications extend beyond Musk. They touch on the broader issue of how civilian technologies—from social media platforms to satellite networks—can be coopted into warfare. In an era where private innovation often outpaces government regulation, the absence of clear accountability mechanisms becomes perilous.

The tragedy of civilian casualties forces a reckoning. Can a technology designed to connect humanity be responsibly managed when it becomes a tool of destruction? Musk's insistence on neutrality is insufficient. Neutrality without enforcement is complicity.

History offers sobering parallels. The invention of dynamite was intended for construction but became a weapon of war. Nuclear energy promised limitless power but birthed the atomic bomb. Starlink now joins this lineage of innovations whose potential for progress is shadowed by their capacity for harm.

For Musk, the contradiction is personal. His vision of colonizing Mars rests on the premise of safeguarding

humanity's future. Yet the deaths of civilians caused by drones using his technology undermine that mission. A humanity that cannot restrain its destructive impulses on Earth is ill-prepared to build a peaceful civilization among the stars.

Starlink's integration into drone warfare in Ukraine has raised grave ethical questions. The deaths of civilians in Russia underscore the dangerous militarization of civilian technology. While Musk insists on neutrality and peaceful principles, the battlefield reality shows his innovations are deeply entangled in war.

This contradiction forces us to confront the ethical responsibilities of private innovators. Technology cannot be divorced from its consequences. If Musk's vision is truly to advance humanity, he must grapple with the reality that his satellites are not only connecting villages but also guiding weapons. The future of innovation depends not only on what we can build, but on whether we can ensure that our creations serve life rather than destroy it.



Analysis

S. M. Hali

Commissioner Karachi vows full support for Asia Wheelchair Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi has announced full support for the hosting of the Asia Wheelchair Cricket Tournament, scheduled to take place in Karachi this September.

He made the announcement during a meeting at his office with a two-member delegation of All Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Council led by Chairperson Rukhsana Rajput and member Zeeshan Khan. Director Sports Karachi Ghulam Muhammad Khan was also present on the occasion.

The commissioner assured the delegation that the Karachi administration would extend complete cooperation to ensure the event is organised in a grand and memorable manner. He also accepted the request to serve as Chairman of the tournament's organising committee.

Syed Hassan Naqvi said a special dinner would be hosted at the Commissioner House in honor of the partici-



patiating teams and tournament organisers. He added that Karachi would be beautifully decorated to welcome the visiting teams and that guests would receive

warm hospitality throughout the event.

He further said that Syed Murad Ali Shah and Syed Asif Hyder Shah, both known for their strong support of sports and athletes, would fully back the tournament and contribute to its successful execution.

The commissioner directed Director Sports Ghulam Muhammad Khan to remain in close coordination with the organising committee and provide every possible assistance for the smooth conduct of the event.

During the meeting, Rukhsana Rajput and Zeeshan Khan briefed the commissioner in detail about the tournament arrangements. They informed him that the Sindh government, under the patronage of Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, is sponsoring the event and has assured the federation of complete support. At the conclusion of the meeting, the delegation presented the commissioner with a traditional Sindh Ajrak and a commemorative souvenir from the federation.

Japan-Pakistan Development Center: A Significant Step Forward at Open University



Analysis

Aziz ur Rehman

On the world map, Japan stands as an exemplary nation in every respect. Its discipline, advanced technology, quality education, hardworking people, strong economy and high moral values serve as an inspiration for the entire world. This is why every developing country aspires to adopt Japan as a model and achieve similar progress, stability and prosperity.

Japan has not only achieved remarkable success in the industrial and scientific fields but it has also established a unique identity in the world through literature, culture and knowledge. The Japanese nation firmly believes that relations between countries are strengthened not only through trade and politics but also through literature, language and cultural harmony.

With this vision in mind, the Nippon Foundation launched a unique initiative in 2008 called the "Read Japan Project," aimed at promoting global understanding of Japan through literature and academic resources. Under this project, important books related to Japan are donated to universities and libraries around the world so that students, teachers and researchers may better understand Japanese history, politics, economy, culture and philosophy.

An important development in this regard recently took place when the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Akamatsu Shuichi presented 168 valuable English-language books to the central library of Allama Iqbal Open University during the inauguration ceremony of the "Japan-Pakistan Development Center." On this occasion, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, formally received the academic collection.

These books cover a wide range of subjects including Japan's history, politics, economy, security, international relations, philosophy, literature, language, and culture. Undoubtedly, this initiative will not only strengthen educational and cultural ties between the two countries but will also provide Pakistani students with a golden opportunity to understand the secrets behind Japan's development.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain,



emphasized that equipping youth with modern skills and international languages has become a vital need of the present era. According to him, the Japan-Pakistan Development Center will play an effective role in this regard and help connect Pakistani youth with opportunities at the global level. He also expressed hope that the center would further strengthen educational, cultural and economic relations between the two countries.

Japanese Ambassador Akamatsu Shuichi also addressed the ceremony and appreciated the long-standing friendly relations between Pakistan and Japan. He stated that educational cooperation would bring both countries even closer in the future and that the center would not only provide opportunities for young people to learn the Japanese language but would also contribute to their professional development.

Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, said on the occasion that the university has always remained committed to promoting modern education, research and international collaboration and that the Japan-Pakistan Development Center is a practical manifestation of this vision. According to him, the center will play a significant role in introducing students and researchers to Japanese language, culture, and modern scientific and technical trends.

Today, the world acknowledges that Japan's true strength lies not only in its technology but also in its education, discipline, national awareness and

love for books. Japan has sent a powerful message to the world that even after devastation, a nation can rise again if its determination remains strong. This is why Japan is not merely a country anymore, it has become a shining symbol of progress, hope and knowledge.

For a developing country like Pakistan, Japan's example is especially important because Japan has taught the world that if a nation possesses determination, sincere leadership and a youth devoted to knowledge and hard work then the journey toward development can never remain impossible. Today, there is a need for us to prioritize education, research, discipline and honesty so that Pakistan may move forward on the same path of progress and prosperity for which Japan stands as a bright example.

The need of the hour is not merely to dream of development but to adopt Japan's spirit of practical struggle, punctuality, national unity and love for books as part of our lives. History bears witness that nations rise only when they make knowledge their weapon, hard work their devotion and character their identity. Japan has taught the world that even after atomic devastation, a nation can stand up again if its spirit remains alive. Now the decision lies with us: whether we wish to remain in the darkness of despair or step onto the bright path of knowledge, research, and development of which Japan today stands as a successful example before the entire world.

tapmad Secures Exclusive Digital and Television Rights for the FIFA World Cup in Pakistan

Has secured Exclusive Digital & Television rights for the FIFA WORLD CUP 2026 in Pakistan



Sports Desk

PAKISTAN: tapmad, Pakistan's leading digital streaming platform, proudly announces that it has acquired the exclusive digital and television broadcasting rights for the upcoming FIFA World Cup in Pakistan. This milestone further strengthens tapmad's position as the first choice for sports streaming in the country.

Over the years, tapmad has consistently streamed some of the world's biggest football leagues, building a strong reputation among football lovers as a platform they can rely on for seamless, high-quality viewing. With a deep understanding of fan expectations and evolving consumption habits, tapmad continues to position itself at the forefront of digital sports entertainment.

The FIFA World Cup, organized by FIFA, is the biggest international football tournament in the world, bringing together billions of fans across different countries and cultures. The upcoming edition will be the largest in the tournament's history, featuring 48 teams, more matches, and wider global participation.

With this partnership, tapmad will stream every match live in HD on its digital platform. As part of the FIFA World Cup experience, tapmad will also introduce interactive features including live match timelines, lineups, detailed statistics, minute-by-minute updates, and Multi-Stream Split-Screen Viewing on TV app, allowing fans to watch multiple matches at the same time.

Yassir Pasha, CEO of tapmad, stated "This is a defining moment not just for tapmad, but for how football will be experienced in Pakistan. As the World Cup expands and brings more of the world into the game, our role is to ensure that access keeps pace with that scale. We are focused on delivering an experience that is seamless, uninterrupted, and worthy of the passion this sport commands."

Aly Rana, COO of tapmad, added: "The FIFA World Cup carries a level of passion and expectation that few events can match. Alongside uninterrupted streaming, we are also introducing first-of-its-kind features like Multi-Stream Split-Screen Viewing and advanced live match tracking, giving fans a more immersive and interactive way to experience the tournament."

As anticipation builds for the world's biggest football spectacle, tapmad is set to become the definitive destination for football fans in Pakistan, bringing the energy, action, and unity of the FIFA World Cup closer than ever before.

Bridging the Gap between School Learning & Real-World Application

Continued from Page 4

with industry is essential to create an enabling environment. Policy-makers must also align education with the evolving demands of the job market.

Bridging the gap between school learning and real-world application is not merely an educational reform - it is a necessity for national development. An education system that integrates theory with practice can produce individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also capable, innovative, and adaptable. Such individuals are better equipped to contribute to economic growth, social stability,

and global competitiveness.

In conclusion, the future of education in Pakistan lies in its ability to connect learning with life. By promoting experiential learning, strengthening industry linkages, reforming assessment systems, and leveraging technology, the country can transform its education system into a dynamic and practical force. Bridging this gap will empower students to turn knowledge into action, ultimately shaping a more skilled, confident, and progressive society.

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Voices Heard, Justice Delivered

Continued from Page 4

signalling: it communicates that accountability is not selectively applied, and that rank provides no exemption from scrutiny. Complementing this is the enforcement of a zero-tolerance policy toward legal violations across all tiers of the force - a normative commitment to the rule of law that, if consistently applied, can reshape organizational culture over time.

Beyond individual grievance resolution, the initiative functions as an intelligence-gathering mechanism for operational policing. Direct citizen interaction reveals patterns - such as localised crime clusters, emerging community tensions, and administrative bottlenecks - that formal reporting structures often fail to capture in real-time. In this respect, the Khuli Kachehri model transcends its remedial function and enters the domain of anticipatory governance, enabling early intervention before disputes escalate into systemic issues.

The parallel activation of multiple

complaint registration channels - digital, telephonic, and in-person - further enhances inclusivity, ensuring that geographic or technological constraints do not exclude segments of the population from redress mechanisms. This multi-modal approach reflects an understanding that equitable access to justice requires diverse pathways, not a single institutional gateway.

From a public administration standpoint, the initiative embodies the core principles of New Public Management: citizen-centricity, performance accountability, and the decentralization of service delivery. The visible commitment of senior leadership has been instrumental in sustaining institutional momentum - a reminder that reforms rarely survive on structural design alone; they require champions.

Challenges, however, remain. Scalability and inter-regional consistency are critical concerns. The quality of hearings inevitably varies with the capacity and disposition of presiding officials, and without robust monitoring frameworks, outcomes risk

becoming idiosyncratic rather than systematic. Integration of centralized digital case management systems would enhance traceability, reduce attrition of unresolved cases, and support evidence-based evaluation of the initiative's long-term impact.

Sustainability, ultimately, is the definitive test. Initiatives anchored in individual leadership are vulnerable to discontinuity; those embedded in institutional systems and legislative frameworks endure. The Khuli Kachehri program has demonstrated proof of concept - that proximity, responsiveness, and accountability can tangibly improve the relationship between citizens and law enforcement. The imperative now is institutionalization: converting a reform initiative into a permanent architecture of participatory governance. Effective public institutions are not built through policy announcements alone, but through the disciplined, daily practice of showing up for the people they serve.

(The writer is Lahore based public policy analyst who can be reached at muneebahmed2225@gmail.com)

Israel and the US Retreat as Iran...

Continued from Page 4

broader economic cost of the war to the United States could ultimately exceed \$1 trillion when inflationary pressures, military spending, market instability, and indirect economic damage are included.

Israel also faced devastating consequences. The Israeli economy contracted sharply during the conflict, with reduced tourism, falling investment, declining consumer confidence, and repeated disruptions caused by missile attacks and mobilization costs. Israeli businesses faced uncertainty while infrastructure and military spending strained public finances. More importantly, Israel failed to achieve its central strategic objectives. Iran's government remained intact. Iran's missile and drone capabilities survived. Regional resistance networks in Lebanon and Gaza remained operational. Instead of emerging weakened, Iran emerged emboldened.

Indeed, the most profound geopolitical consequence of the war may be Iran's transformed regional position. After surviving months of coordinated military pressure from both Israel and the United States, Tehran dramatically

shifted its position. Iranian leaders now argue openly that negotiations can no longer revolve around limiting Iran's capabilities. Instead, Tehran demands reparations for war damage, reconstruction of oil infrastructure, compensation for civilian casualties, recognition of Iranian sovereignty over Hormuz security arrangements, and an end to Israeli military operations in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and surrounding territories.

From Tehran's perspective, the war proved that Iran could withstand the combined power of the United States and Israel while continuing to exert regional influence. Across much of the Global South, Iran increasingly presents itself as a symbol of resistance against Western military dominance. Even countries that do not politically align with Iran privately acknowledge that the conflict exposed the limits of American and Israeli military power in the twenty-first century.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of strategic failure lies in the final political reality itself. After months of military escalation, trillions in economic damage, global inflation, disrupted trade, and regional instability, the United States and

Israel are now seeking disengagement while Iran stands politically unbroken. Washington's own leadership now publicly signals that Hormuz is no longer America's problem. Yet the closure of Hormuz was itself a direct consequence of the war launched by Israel and the United States.

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

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Regional Ambassadors' Conference

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, and Ambassadors posing for a group photo at the closing session of the Regional Envoys' Conference held from 14-18 May 2026.



Photo: PID

Ishaq Dar chairs concluding session of Regional Ambassadors' Conference in Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Regional Ambassadors' Conference, held in Islamabad from May 14 to 18, concluded with a session chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, according to the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the concluding session, the deputy prime minister reviewed the extensive consultations and key recommendations formulated over the past several days. Addressing the participants, Ishaq Dar emphasized Pakistan's long-standing, historical, and brotherly relations with the Gulf countries and reiterated the government's commitment to further strengthening these partnerships in political, economic, and people-to-people domains.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to promote economic coopera-

tion, as well as regional peace and stability, through proactive diplomacy and engagement. The deputy prime minister underlined that the welfare and well-being of Pakistanis residing in Gulf countries and across the world remain a top priority for the government.

Ishaq Dar also highlighted Pakistan's constructive and facilitating role in fostering regional harmony and stability. He stressed the need for continuous engagement and coordination to achieve diplomatic objectives.

The deputy prime minister directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, heads of Pakistani missions abroad, and relevant ministries to maintain close coordination, ensure active diplomatic outreach, and effectively implement the recommendations emerging from the conference.

Finance Minister, World Bank Team Review Economic Reform Priorities and Institutional Transformation Agenda

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb met with World Bank Country Director Ms. Bolormaa Amgaabazar to review progress on ongoing economic reforms supported by the World Bank.

The Minister thanked the World Bank for its continuous engagement in areas like public financial management, institutional capacity building, debt management, and private sector development.

He stressed the need for technical assistance to be focused, specialized, and aligned with defined reform objectives, emphasizing the desire for high-quality international expertise and practical implementation support to build sustainable in-house capacity.



Discussions specifically addressed the transformation of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) through digitization, automation, and procedural simplification, with the World Bank providing updates on its support for the Medium-Term Revenue Strategy and FBR modernization.

Both parties agreed on strengthening coordination to accelerate implementation and ensure reforms support transparency and taxpayer facilitation.

Broader structural reforms for sustainable, export-oriented growth were also covered, including trade

facilitation, regulatory reforms, and capital market development, with the Minister highlighting the priority of deepening domestic debt markets to reduce reliance on bank financing.

Finally, they discussed labor market reforms, vocational skills development, and workforce competitiveness, reaffirming commitment to close collaboration for advancing Pakistan's economic reform agenda and achieving sustainable growth.

The delegation included Mr. Tobias Haque, Lead Economist and Team Lead Fiscal Operation; Ms. Anna Twum, Team Lead Growth and Jobs and Economist; Mr. Rafay Khan, Senior Financial Sector Specialist; Ms. Sahar Etezaz, IFC Country Officer; and Mr. Shabih Ali Mohib, Regional Manager, Economics and Public Sector.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif's official visit to Azerbaijan to attend World Urban Forum



Spokesman Report

BAKU: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif arrived in Baku to attend international "World Urban Forum."

Upon her arrival at the World Urban Forum, President of Azerbaijan, H. E. Ilham Aliyev, and his wife warmly welcomed her with a grand reception, as she is a special state guest of the Azerbaijani Pres-

ident. She took a group photo with the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and his wife; and will deliver a keynote address at the World Leaders Summit at Baku Olympic Stadium.

Chief Minister Punjab will present Punjab's affordable housing model, "Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar" (Own Roof, Own Home) program as a case study to the international delegates at Pakistan Pavilion in the global forum

Anmol Pinky to face court in Central Jail Karachi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Alleged drug peddler Anmol alias Pinky will be presented before a court in the Central Jail Karachi on Monday, authorities said.

Earlier, the authorities had planned to present Anmol Pinky in the City Court.

The court issued the order following a request by DIG South, Asad Raza, citing security concerns.

Anmol Pinky, who faces

more than 13 cases, will be produced in connection with three separate criminal cases, including a murder case registered at the Baghdadi police station.

Police will also submit a progress report during the court hearing.

The Baghdadi police will escort Anmol Pinky to the Central Jail, where proceedings will take place.

Her lawyer is expected to request that she be formally



remanded to jail, while police will seek further physical remand for ongoing investigations.

Previously, Anmol's physical remand had been granted in two cases, and she had been sent to jail under judicial remand in multiple other cases.

Authorities confirmed that all follow-up proceedings will be conducted within the jail court due to heightened security concerns.

IRSA releases 153,300 cusecs water

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 153,300 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 146,500 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1449.60 feet which was 49.60 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 56,200 cusecs and 70,000 cusecs, respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1164.70 feet, which was 114.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 36,000 cusecs and 39,000 cusecs, respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 111,500, 78,700, 60,200, and 17,900 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 36,300 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 7,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Power distribution companies target consumers misusing subsidised electricity meters

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Electricity consumers using more than one single-phase meter to obtain subsidised power tariffs in the country are likely to face higher electricity bills as distribution companies begin a crackdown on misuse of the protected consumer category.

According to power sector authorities, electricity distribution companies, including the Lahore Electric Supply Company, are compiling records of consumers holding multiple meters to benefit from lower electricity tariffs and government subsidies.

Officials said consumers found



using more than one meter to remain eligible for the protected category would lose the subsidy and would instead be billed under the non-protected tariff system. The move is expected to increase monthly electricity bills by around Rs8,000 to Rs10,000 for affected

consumers, according to officials familiar with the matter.

Power companies have also started printing details of subsidy amounts and QR codes on electricity bills.

The officials said the QR code system would help collect data on consumers with additional electricity meters and assist in identifying genuine beneficiaries of subsidised tariffs.

Under the new mechanism, consumers are expected to upload the required information through the QR code system.

Officials warned that those failing to provide the requested data could have their subsidy withdrawn.

Another drug racket busted: Fauzia Baloch, sister held in supply chain

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Law enforcement agencies have arrested Fauzia Baloch, her sister Sakeena, and an associate identified as Mola Bakhsh in connection with an alleged drug supply network distributing crystal methamphetamine (Ice) and heroin across Karachi.

During interrogation, Fauzia disclosed that the narcotics were transported from Peshawar to Islamabad before reaching Karachi, with five individuals based in Peshawar directly involved in the supply chain. She named Shoaib Baloch, Anees, and Javed as three central figures in the operation.

A significant lead has emerged from the investigation: a government employee named Abdul Shakoor has been identified as a key supplier, allegedly providing Ice and



heroin from Peshawar. Investigators are now pursuing his whereabouts.

High-quality ice was being supplied at up to Rs200,000 per kilogram, according to the interrogation findings. Sakeena, arrested alongside Fauzia, was revealed during questioning to be her biological sister.

Fauzia has since been transferred to judicial remand and shifted to prison as the investigation continues.