



A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول
 ابو موسیٰ اشعری رضی اللہ عنہ سے روایت ہے کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ جو شخص بھی کوئی چیز بھی تکلیف برداشت کرنے والی، جو اسے کسی چیز کو تن کر ہوئی ہو، اللہ سے زیادہ (میر کرنے والا) نہیں ہے۔ لوگ اس کے لیے اولاد ظہر آتے ہیں اور وہ انہیں سمندر سے دیتا ہے بلکہ انہیں روزی بھی دیتا ہے۔
 (بخاری ص ۶۹۹ نمبر ۶۰۰۰)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Daily The Spokesman



Zardari calls National Assembly and Senate budget sessions for June 5

President Asif Ali Zardari has summoned the budget session of the National Assembly on June 5 at 5pm, according to official sources on Friday. He has also called a separate session of the Senate on the same day at 6pm, the sources added.



Government reduce fuel price as Eid gift to citizens

Pakistan's federal government on Friday reduced the prices of petrol and diesel by Rs22 per litre, the Prime Minister said, calling it a "gift for the people" on the third day of Eid. In a statement, the Prime Minister said the move fulfilled his promise to the nation. "Providing relief to the people is one of my top priorities," he said.

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Eid prayers

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, offers Eid prayers with soldiers during his visited Zhob District, Balochistan.



Photo: ISPR

Field Marshal vows relentless action against terrorism

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir spent Eid al-Azha with troops deployed on the western frontlines in Balochistan's Zhob district, reaffirming that security operations would continue until terrorism is completely eradicated.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the Field Marshal offered Eid prayers with officers and soldiers stationed at forward posts along the western borders.

Special prayers were also offered for Pakistan's peace, stability and prosperity.

During the visit, the Field Marshal laid a floral wreath at the martyrs' memorial and paid tribute to soldiers who sacrificed their lives in defence of the country.

The Field Marshal said that the Indian-backed terrorist group Fitna al-Hindustan and its facilitators were targeting innocent civilians, adding that such cowardly acts could never weaken the resolve of Pakistan's armed forces and the nation.

The Field Marshal reiterated that the Pakistan Army, law enforcement agencies and the people of Balochistan would continue operations until terrorism was completely eliminated and hostile designs against the country were defeated.

Pakistan reiterates steadfast commitment to global peace: PM

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan reiterated its steadfast commitment to further strengthening global peace efforts through active participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions.

In a message on International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers observed on 29 May, he said, "Our continued contribution reflects Pakistan's enduring commitment to international peace and security, as well as

to the principles of multilateralism."

He said, "Today, Pakistan joins the international community in paying rich tribute to the brave men and women serving under the United Nations flag on the occasion of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers."

"Observed annually across the world, this day recognizes the invaluable services and sacrifices rendered by military, police, and civilian peacekeepers deployed in conflict-affected regions in pursuit of global peace and security," he added.



The day also commemorates the establishment of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the first-ever UN peacekeeping mission, which commenced operations in Palestine in 1948.

"Over the course of peacekeeping history, more than two million men and women have served in over seventy UN peace missions around the world. Pakistan remains among the longest-serving and leading contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Through their dedicated service,

troop-contributing countries continue to play a vital role in the maintenance of international peace and security, reflecting our collective commitment to peace as a shared global priority," he remarked.

He said, "Pakistan takes immense pride in its martyrs and in all those brave sons and daughters who continue to serve with exceptional professionalism, commitment, and resolve in promoting peace, stability, and the protection of vulnerable communities across different regions of the world."

DPM/FM Dar, Cuban FM reaffirm commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations



Spokesman Report

NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday met with Foreign Minister of Cuba Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla on sidelines of the UN Security Council Open Debate.

During the meeting, they discussed regional developments and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening Pakistan-Cuba relations and exploring new

avenues of mutually beneficial cooperation.

DPM/FM also recalled with gratitude Cuba's support to Pakistan during the 2005 earthquake, while FM Parilla appreciated Pakistan's solidarity and assistance during natural disasters experienced by his country.

Both sides reiterated their commitment to further the relations and explore new avenues of cooperation that are mutually beneficial to the people of both countries.

Pezeshkian praises Pakistan PM, backs Islamabad's mediation role

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Friday that Iran's foreign policy is focused on expanding cooperation with Muslim and neighbouring countries across all areas of engagement.

In a post on social media,

Pezeshkian said recent discussions with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had reinforced Tehran's commitment to diplomacy.

He also expressed appreciation for Malaysia's "humanitarian stance" and praised Pakistan for its initiative and "effective efforts"

in supporting progress toward an agreement.

The remarks come as Pakistan continues to play a leading mediating role in talks between Tehran and Washington aimed at ending the ongoing conflict that began on February 28.

In recent days, senior Pakistani officials, including the army chief



and interior minister, have visited Tehran for consultations, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

has indicated hopes that Islamabad could soon host a fresh round of negotiations.

Pakistan's Global Standing Rises as India's Isolation Strategy Falts

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: India's strategy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi to diplomatically isolate Pakistan has largely proven unsuccessful, with Islamabad experiencing a resurgence in global influence. Following a 2016 attack, Modi vowed to isolate Pakistan, but nearly a decade later, Pakistan has strengthened ties with China, rebuilt relations with the US, and become a key mediator in US-Tehran talks. Analysts note Pakistan's successful navigation of shifting geopolitical dynamics, while India's hardline approach has yielded unintended consequences. A significant shift occurred after the May 2025

military confrontation, where the US brokered a ceasefire. Pakistan publicly thanked President Trump, who claimed credit for averting wider conflict. India struggled to gain international support for its claims regarding Pakistan's alleged involvement in the earlier Kashmir attack. Meanwhile, Pakistan leveraged the situation to enhance its diplomatic standing. India's prior policy of "strategic restraint" gave way to intensified isolation efforts after attacks blamed on Pakistan, including boycotting the 2016 SAARC summit. This, however, weakened regional integration while Pakistan repaired ties with major powers and Gulf states. Pakistan's defence cooperation with China

deepened, and the 2025 escalation underscored this growing military partnership. Conversely, India's close ties with Israel and its stance on Palestine have complicated relations with some Muslim nations. Critics suggest this alignment, along with concerns over anti-Muslim rhetoric in India, has bolstered Gulf relations and positioned itself as a bridge between global powers. Improving US-Pakistan ties, evidenced by mineral and crypto projects, are attributed to "astute diplomacy." This diplomatic rehabilitation contrasts with Pakistan's post-9/11 isolation. Islamabad has refocused on diplomacy and regional engagement.

Portuguese Minister appreciates Pakistan's mediation efforts in W Asia

News Desk

NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday met with Portugal's Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, Paulo Rangel on the sidelines of UNSC open briefing.

During the meeting they discussed matters of mutual concern including bilateral relations, regional developments, and cooperation at multilateral forums, including at the UN.

The Portuguese Minister expressed his appreciation for Pakistan's mediation efforts in West Asia. They also exchanged views on the Palestinian issue.

DPM/FM also invited Foreign Minister Paulo Rangel to visit Pakistan, which he warmly accepted.



Iranian media highlights Gilani's congratulatory message to Iranian Parliament speaker

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Iranian media highlighted Chairman Senate Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani's congratulatory message to Dr. Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on his re-election as Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, reflecting strong parliamentary ties between Pakistan and Iran.

Iran's official news agency, IRNA, prominently covered Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani's message, underscoring the growing warmth and mutual respect between the two brotherly nations.

The coverage reflects the importance Iran attaches to the message and highlights the shared commitment of both countries to further strengthen parliamentary cooperation, regional understanding, and bilateral relations.

Gilani expressed confidence that under the continued leadership of Dr. Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, parliamentary engagement between the two countries would reach new heights, contributing to deeper friendship and enhanced cooperation for the mutual benefit of both nations.

Azad Kashmir PM Outlines Welfare Initiatives for Citizens



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that the government is taking practical steps for the welfare of the common man, resolving public issues, and improving the stand-

ard of living. He said the government is making full efforts to provide basic facilities to the people, create employment opportunities, and complete development projects on a priority basis so that the public can get real relief.

He expressed these views while talking to Vice Chairman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Press Foundation Sardar

Zulfikar Ali, former President Central Press Club Syed Afaq Shah, and President Digital Media Journalists Association Nasir Chaudhry. Prime Minister's Spokesperson Shaukat Javed Mir and Press Secretary Asif Rathore were also present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir said that the media is a strong link

between the state and the people, and positive and responsible journalism plays a key role in the construction and development of society. He added that the government will continue serious and practical measures for the protection of journalists' rights, welfare initiatives, and to make the media's positive role more effective.

Muslim Conference sees surge in engagement ahead of Eid al-Adha



The Muslim Conference is experiencing a surge in public engagement, celebrating Eid al-Adha with significant political rallies and new member inductions, aiming to surpass historical participation records. Sardar Atiq Ahmed Khan, President of the Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, was a central figure in these events. He welcomed hundreds of new members, including prominent individuals and their families, who switched allegiance from other parties to the Muslim Conference. Khan also visited Dhirkot, attending a reception hosted by Raja Shamshad Khan, son of the late Atta Muhammad Khan. This event saw Raja Shamshad Khan and his family pledge full support for the Muslim Conference in upcoming elections. During the reception, a special prayer was offered for Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, former President of the state. Khan lauded the historical ties of the Raja family to the Muslim Conference and its leaders, including KH Khurshid and Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry. Ms. Saba Shamshad, a leader from the Women's Wing, also declared her support. Furthermore, Khan participated in Eid greetings at Mujahid I House in Ghaziabad, where he met with various party officials and supporters. He also paid a condolence visit to Raja Abdul Qayyum Khan, a senior leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party, to offer condolences on the passing of his brother, Raja Akhlaq Khan.

Houston Conference on Kashmir concludes with strong commitment to global awareness campaign



Spokesman Report

HOUSTON -TEXAS: The Kashmir Global Council (KGC) conference in Houston concluded with a strong call for awareness regarding the Kashmir dispute and human rights abuses in Indian-occupied Jammu & Kashmir, advocating for self-determination. KGC President Farooq Siddiqi highlighted the dispute's impact on South Asian peace and urged the global Pakistani diaspora to support Kashmiri advocacy, noting the intimidation faced by activists. Speakers emphasized that peace in South Asia is impossible without a just resolution of the Kashmir issue, aligned with UN resolutions and Kashmiri aspirations. A coordinated America-wide awareness campaign will be launched, involving various diaspora communities, policymakers, academics, media, and civil society. A Steering Committee will be established to guide advocacy, outreach, and policy engagement, focusing on promoting self-determination, raising international awareness, reminding parties of their commitments, educating about regional risks, documenting human rights violations, advocating for legal reforms, exposing abuses like mass graves and enforced disappearances, and defending Kashmiri fundamental rights. Furthermore, Kashmir Martyrs' Day, July 13th, will be commemorated globally by diaspora communities to honor sacrifices for Kashmir's freedom and self-determination. Participants pledged annual events to inspire future generations in the pursuit of justice and peace. The conference ended with a commitment to sustained peaceful advocacy and international engagement to ensure Kashmiri voices are heard worldwide.

Salman condoles with Allama Sajid Naqvi over wife's death

RAWALPINDI: Provincial Minister for Health, Punjab and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order, Khawaja Salman Rafique, on Friday visited the residence of Head of Millat-e-Jafariya Pakistan, Allama Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi and offered condolences on the demise of his wife.

During the meeting, the provincial minister prayed for the eternal peace of the deceased and expressed sympathy with the bereaved family. Commissioner Rawalpindi, Engineer Amir Khattak and Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Dr Hassan Waqar Cheema were also present on the occasion. They offered 'Fatihah' for the departed soul and prayed for the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

Talking to the media, Salman said Allama Sajid Ali Naqvi had always worked for the unity of Pakistan and the promotion of inter-Muslim harmony. He said the law and order situation across Punjab remained peaceful during Eid-ul-Azha due to coordinated efforts by the administration and law enforcement agencies.

The minister said no signs of pollution could be seen anywhere in the province following the Eid sanitation operation.

Tourism closed on Eid Al Adha

ISLAMABAD: Visitors standing near Faisal Mosque as the mosque closed for tourists on Eid-Al-Adha in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Azad Kashmir PM Meets Public Delegations on Eid, Pledges Welfare and Development

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: On the third day of Eid-ul-Azha, public delegations from across Azad Kashmir met with Prime Minister of Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore. The delegations expressed good wishes for the Prime Minister and appreciated the government's public-friendly policies.

Led by Special Assistants Mubashir Munir Awan and Mukhtar Abbasi, the public delegations met the Prime Minister at the Prime Minister's House and conveyed Eid-ul-Azha greetings.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that the current government is working seriously to ensure the welfare of the



common man, resolve public issues, and accelerate the process of construction and development across the state. The primary objective of taking responsibility for a short period is to provide relief to the people, ensure provision of basic facilities, and give special attention to the development of backward areas so that every citizen can benefit from government measures.

The Prime Minister said that Eid-ul-Azha teaches us sacrifice, love,

and brotherhood, and remembering the weaker and deserving sections of society on this occasion is our collective responsibility. He added that the government is working day and night to meet public expectations and the system of merit, transparency, and public service in the state is being further strengthened.

He said that despite limited resources, the government has launched several public welfare projects, while special focus is being

given to health, education, infrastructure, and creating employment opportunities for youth.

On the occasion, Special Assistants Mubashir Munir Awan, Mukhtar Abbasi, and other public delegations expressed confidence in the Prime Minister's leadership and said that the current government is taking positive steps in line with public expectations and serious efforts for the development and prosperity of the state are underway.

The "Hormuz Tax": How the 2026 Blockade is Emptying Pakistan's Middle-Class Wallets

Manahil Saqib

The 2026 war in the Middle East has not only impacted the security dynamics of the world but shifted the global economic structure. The closure of the 21-mile-wide Strait of Hormuz has not only impacted the global economic structure but also impacted the middle-class wallets of Pakistan. The true implications aren't measured on naval maneuvers but actually measured at the local petrol pumps and markets.

The recent rise in petroleum prices isn't just a casual number displayed on boards and new bulletins; rather it's a direct offense to the monthly budgets of middle-class Pakistani's and of salaried professionals and small business owners of the state. This rise in petroleum prices disrupts the domestic economic status of the country and results in a rise in inflation and creates an economic distress

among the masses. In the world of international political economy, this situation is called imported inflation but for Pakistani citizens this can be called Hormuz tax.

The Commute Crisis

The most immediate drain caused by the Middle East crisis is the daily cost of mobility of people. The rise in petroleum prices has made transport difficult for daily users of public transports, Indrive and for other means of transportation. Furthermore, the cost of filling the fuel tanks is much greater than the average calculated budgets of salaried class and the common man.

Since, Pakistan sources approximately 80% of its energy imports through Strait of Hormuz, the blockade triggered Pakistan's domestic politics and started impacting the middle-class wallets deeply.

When insurance costs for Gulf tankers rise sixfold, that cost doesn't vanish; it is offloaded onto the pump price in Rawalpindi. This has forced

a painful lifestyle downgrade. For instance, it has caused fewer family outings, the cancellation of summer trips, prioritizing basic needs over luxuries and hobbies, and the rising popularity of carpooling; not out of choice, but out of necessity. Furthermore, the imposed smart lockdown forces business owners and food chains to shut their businesses early, which not only disrupts the night life of cities but triggers the local market and results in rise of Inflation.

The Price of the Plate: The Invisible Currents Reshaping Our Wallet

Pakistan's economy is ruled by the agriculture sector, and diesel is the fuel that moves the agriculture sector of Pakistan. In 2026, the link between the Strait of Hormuz and a kilogram of onions, and a bag of wheat is highly linked. For example, when the price of fuel increases the cost of transport of wheat and other vegetables from the fields of Punjab to the city markets skyrockets. Furthermore, the prices of

fertilizers also increase because they are dependent on natural gas, which makes it difficult for farmers to sell crops at normal prices. This is not only the problem for farmers but also creates hurdles for other businesses such as the one responsible for transportation, for the sellers, and ultimately the buyers as the cost of food increases in this process.

Recent data shows that transport costs jumped nearly 30% in April 2026 alone. This creates a "second wave" of inflation. The middle class, already struggling due to high costs of electricity bills, is now facing a food crisis which is 20-40% more expensive than before; the Hormuz Tax is not only the tax on transportation but also a tax on the dinner table.

The Shrinking Rupee

Apart from the physical goods, the blockade has caused devaluation of currency and is eroding the currency in bank accounts.

As the government spends billions of dollars to secure energy from more

expensive alternative sources like Oman, our foreign exchange reserves face a Structural Stress Test.

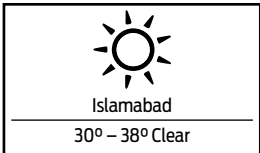
This massive outflow of dollars puts the Pakistani Rupee under immense pressure. As the Rupee weakens, the purchasing power of a middle-class salary fixed in local currency evaporates. While working the same hours for the salary, the amount is 15% less than it was during the start of year as the currency devalues.

The 2026 Gulf crisis not only indicates the casualties caused on the battlefield rather it reflects the shrinking bank accounts of middle-class Pakistanis. This demographic has essentially been forced to act as the economy's involuntary shock absorber, bearing the brunt of a war they did not choose. While the elite class of society is least impacted and can absorb the shockwaves of skyrocketing fuel costs without altering their lifestyles, the middle class is seeing its aspirations; higher education, home ownership, and a stable

future evaporate into the air.

Policymakers of Pakistan must prioritize raw economic insulation. Pakistan as a state can't only depend on the 21-mile strait of Hormuz as the only source of imported energy supplies. An ultimate shift is required to secure the political economic future of the country. Diversifying energy routes, negotiations of bilateral trade, and investments in renewable energy sources such as wind and solar are required for sustainability. The financial security of every Pakistani household is crucial for survival and sustainability or else the blockage like this will result in increasing bills, rising inflation and economic distress among the masses. The crisis of the Middle East is a reminder for economic security for the sake of saving the middle-class wallets from the wrath of foreign crises in the region.

The writer is student of International relations at National Defence University Islamabad



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:19 am
Zohr 12:05 pm
Asr 5:03 pm
Maghrib 7:11 pm
Isha 8:52 pm

EMERGENCY

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

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

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif Undergoes Major Surgery at Sharif Medical City Hospital



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said in an 'X' message that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif underwent a major surgery at Sharif Medical City Hospital, after which she has moved home.

She added that with the grace of Allah Almighty, on the day of Eid, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif personally monitored security, cleanliness, and all other provincial affairs directly from the hospital.

PSCA, 'Suthra Punjab' Launch Joint Operations to Ensure Cleanliness Monitoring

Bureau Report

LAHORE: During the first three days of Eid-ul-Azha, Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), in collaboration with the 'Suthra' Punjab initiative, district administrations, waste management companies, and law enforcement agencies, successfully conducted province-wide operations to monitor cleanliness, public safety, and traffic management.

According to the PSCA spokesperson, continuous monitoring of cleanliness arrangements was carried out through modern Safe City cameras, Artificial Intelligence-based surveillance systems, and drone technology across 42 operational Smart Safe City Centers in Punjab. During Eid holidays, more than 2,000 cleanliness-related observations regarding animal waste and remains on roads, streets, and public places were identified and reported to the relevant Suthra Punjab and Waste Management teams for immediate action. Timely identification and rapid response significantly enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of cleanliness operations.

The spokesperson further stated that Faisalabad Region recorded 404 observations, Gujranwala Region 388, Bahawalpur Region 333, and D. G. Khan Region 293 observations related to cleanliness monitoring. Similarly, Lahore Region recorded 124 observations, Rawalpindi Region 138, Sargodha Region 145, and Sahiwal Region recorded 127 observations during the monitoring campaign. PSCA drones were actively used across Lahore and other districts of Punjab to conduct aerial surveillance of bus terminals, public parks, recreational areas, major highways, cattle markets, and other public spaces. The drone operations facilitated effective monitoring of cleanliness arrangements, public movement, and overall security conditions.

The spokesperson concluded that joint efforts of Punjab Safe Cities Authority and Suthra Punjab played a vital role in maintaining cleanliness, public safety, and essential civic services throughout Eid-ul-Adha, providing citizens with a cleaner, safer, and more secure environment.



throughout Eid-ul-Adha, providing citizens with a cleaner, safer, and more secure environment.

Keen interest

ISLAMABAD: Girls taking interest in the newly installed statues of Quaid e Azam and his companions at Pakistan Monument in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Decision to abolish 'Charpai and Manja System' in Faisalabad region immediately after Eid: RPO Sukhera

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera has said that as soon as the Eid days are over, the large charpai and manja system will be completely abolished from the streets and alleys in Faisalabad and other districts of the region so that women passing by can be protected from harassment. According to the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, strictest action will be taken against suspicious activities and elements harassing women by sitting on these charpais in the morning, evening and late



at night. He said in two words that there is no other powerful person in Faisalabad region except the police. RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera further said that protecting the

lives and property of citizens, providing timely justice and restoring public confidence in the police is our top priority. Law and order will be further improved through modern technology and community policing.

The joint strategy and field monitoring of district police officers in Faisalabad, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh and Chinot have played a significant role in reducing crimes.

On the other hand, according to experts, long-term evaluation of these data is also necessary so that the effects of improvements can be assessed on a regular basis.

DC Umar Abbas Mela Monitors Eid Cleanliness Operation Across District



Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela spearheaded a comprehensive Eid ul Azha cleanliness operation across Toba Tek Singh district, adhering to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision. For three days, all relevant departments and officers worked round the clock, with continuous monitoring of cleanliness, waste disposal, and municipal services. Deputy Commissioner Mela personally inspected various locations, including sacrificial points, waste collection and dumping sites, parks, bus stands, hospitals, and cattle markets, ensuring efficient operations and civic facilities. Temporary waste points were disinfected with rose water and lime. A surprise visit to the "Suthra Punjab" control room reviewed the online monitoring and complaint system. The operation involved 3,580 workers and 1,158 machinery units, utilizing a range of vehicles like dumpers, loader rickshaws, and excavators. Deputy Commissioner Mela praised the dedication of all involved in providing a clean environment and improved facilities to citizens.

Attock Cleans Up Post-Eid: Special Operation Continues Vigorously

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Under the special directives of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, field activities continued vigorously on the second day of the Eid-ul-Adha cleanliness operation in District Attock. Additional Deputy Commissioner General and Managing Director of Suthra Punjab Agency Attock, Anil Saeed, visited various areas of the city and reviewed arrangements for the collection of sacrificial animal waste, timely disposal of garbage, and overall cleanliness measures.

On this occasion, Chief Officer Municipal Committee Attock Sardar Aftab Ahmed Khan, Assistant Commissioner Attock Arif Qureshi, and officers of the Suthra Punjab Agency accompanied him. The officers inspected various collection points, dumping sites, and cleanliness operations underway in urban areas, while also reviewing the performance of the sanitation staff.

Anil Saeed met with citizens and sought their feedback regarding the cleanliness arrangements. Citizens expressed satisfaction over the timely measures taken for sanitation and disposal of animal waste during Eid-ul-Adha and appreciated the performance of the district administration, Suthra Punjab Agency, and other concerned departments.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General and MD Suthra Punjab Agency Anil Saeed stated that, in line with the vision of the Chief Minister Punjab, all departments are actively working to maintain a clean environment across the district, and the cleanliness operation will continue uninterrupted during the Eid holidays.

Chinese Film Screening at ACP Marks 75 Years of Pakistan-China Diplomatic Ties

News Desk

KARACHI: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Liaison Office Karachi, hosted a "Chinese Film Screening" to commemorate 75 years of Pakistan-China diplomatic ties. The event, attended by dignitaries including the Consul General of China, H. E. Yang Yundong, and President of the Arts Council Muhammad Ahmed Shah, aimed to solidify the enduring friendship and cultural exchange between the two nations.

The ceremony commenced with the national anthems of both countries, followed by a tribute song celebrating Pak-China camaraderie, jointly performed by Pakistani and Chinese singers. A cake-cutting ceremony marked the anniversary milestone.

The featured film, "The Shadow Chaser," starred Jackie Chan. President Muhammad Ahmed Shah emphasized the resilience and deepening of Pakistan-China relations over 75 years, highlighting that their bond transcends mere trade and infrastructure, extending to a profound connection between their people, with culture serving as a foundational element.

He noted the Arts Council's role in fostering international cultural understanding through events like the World Culture Festival. Consul General Yang Yundong underscored the 75th anniversary as a testament to trust, sincerity, and shared future aspirations.

He called for enhanced cooperation in education, technology, and innovation, recognizing youth as a vital asset for future bilateral ties. Director General Irfan Soomro pointed out the large-scale impact of the 75-year friendship and China's development as a lesson for Pakistan, emphasizing discipline, planning, and human resource investment.

He recognized the Arts Council's contribution to diplomacy through cultural initiatives, transforming Karachi into a burgeoning global cultural hub and strengthening people-to-people connections. Muhammad Ahmed Shah was commended for his leadership in elevating the Arts Council internationally.

The event concluded with the presentation of bouquets to the chief guest and DG MOFA.



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Trump's War of Contradictions

From the beginning of the Iran conflict on February 28 until today, one question has increasingly puzzled diplomats, military analysts, investors, and ordinary citizens alike: What exactly is the United States trying to achieve? In less than three months, President Donald Trump has threatened Iran, announced impending peace, imposed deadlines, delayed deadlines, declared military success, pursued negotiations, revived military action, demanded regional concessions, and repeatedly altered the stated objectives of the conflict. The result has been a growing perception of inconsistency that is now affecting not only diplomacy but also global markets, energy prices, and America's international credibility.

Few critics have articulated this concern more forcefully than former UN weapons inspector and former U. S. Marine Corps intelligence officer Scott Ritter. In a recent interview, Ritter described the United States as "agreement incapable," arguing that Washington's constantly shifting positions make it nearly impossible to sustain meaningful negotiations.

According to Ritter, Iran has remained relatively consistent in its demands, while American positions have repeatedly changed during the course of talks.

Ritter argues that President Trump approaches diplomacy not as a treaty-maker but as a dealmaker, meaning that any agreement can be revised, renegotiated, or abandoned if it no longer appears politically advantageous.

This contradiction became increasingly visible throughout the Iran negotiations. On multiple occasions, senior

American officials signaled that a ceasefire framework, memorandum of understanding, or broader peace arrangement was close to completion. Financial markets reacted immediately. Oil prices retreated, stock markets rallied, and investors began pricing in the prospect of regional stability. Yet just as optimism gained momentum, military strikes resumed, new conditions emerged, or negotiations abruptly stalled. Each reversal erased confidence that had only recently been restored.

The latest example involves Oman. For decades, Oman has served as one of America's most reliable diplomatic intermediaries with Iran. Yet recent threats directed toward Muscat shocked many observers throughout the Gulf region. If Oman, one of Washington's most dependable partners, can be publicly pressured in such a manner, Gulf governments naturally wonder how secure their own relationships with Washington truly are. The issue is no longer simply military power; it is predictability. Allies need confidence that commitments made today will remain valid tomorrow.

Ritter argues that the deeper problem is that Trump himself is unpredictable. In one of the most controversial portions of his interview, Ritter characterized Trump's behavior as reflecting traits associated with narcissistic personality disorder. These remarks represent Ritter's personal opinion and not a medical diagnosis. Nevertheless, Ritter contends that Trump's decision-making

is heavily influenced by personal considerations, making policy outcomes difficult to forecast through traditional geopolitical analysis. In Ritter's view, analysts are often attempting to apply rational strategic frameworks to decisions that may be driven by entirely different motivations.

Complicating matters further is the role of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Since Trump's return to office, Netanyahu has maintained unusually frequent contact with Washington. Several reports suggest that key conversations between the two leaders coincided with major shifts in American policy toward Iran. While close coordination between the United States and Israel is expected, critics argue that negotiations often appear to move forward until regional security concerns or Israeli objections re-enter the discussion. Supporters of Israel counter that military pressure is precisely what forces Iran to negotiate. Regardless of which interpretation proves correct, the repeated sequence of diplomacy, escalation, consultation, and renewed escalation has created an impression that negotiations remain vulnerable to external political pressures.

The disagreement became especially visible when reports emerged of tensions between Trump and Netanyahu regarding ceasefire proposals. According to media accounts, Trump appeared willing to explore a temporary diplomatic window while Netanyahu favored maintaining military pressure.

Whether these disagreements represent genuine strategic differences or merely negotiating tactics remains uncertain. Yet their existence underscores how much the trajectory of the conflict has become intertwined with personal relationships and political calculations.

Perhaps Ritter's most consequential argument concerns the military balance itself. He contends that the United States failed to achieve its strategic objectives against Iran and that Washington's military posture is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. Ritter points to publicly discussed production timelines for Tomahawk missiles, THAAD interceptors, Patriot systems, and other advanced weapons as evidence that replenishment could take years rather than months. According to Ritter, America has become dependent on highly sophisticated but difficult-to-replace technologies, while potential adversaries have prepared for long-term attritional warfare.

These assessments remain disputed by U. S. defense officials, but they have gained attention because they raise uncomfortable questions about industrial capacity and military sustainability. Ritter also argues that sanctions, long considered one of America's most effective geopolitical tools, are gradually losing their power. He points to the increasing use of alternative currencies, cryptocurrency transactions, and non-dollar payment mechanisms among countries seeking to reduce dependence on the American financial system.

In Ritter's analysis, Washington's extensive use of sanctions over the past two decades may have accelerated efforts

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Analysis

Qamar Bashir

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

Pakistan joins the international community in paying tribute to the dedication, professionalism and sacrifice of United Nations peacekeepers serving in difficult and often dangerous conditions across the world. We honour the courage and commitment of the 183 Pakistani peacekeepers who laid down their lives in the service of international peace and security.

For more than six decades, Pakistan has remained among the leading troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Over 270,000 Pakistani peacekeepers have served with distinction in 48 UN missions across four continents. Pakistani women peacekeepers are also playing an increasingly important role in these missions. Their service reflects Pakistan's abiding commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Pakistan is also host to one of the oldest United Nations peacekeeping missions, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). The continued presence and relevance of this Mission reaffirm the responsibility of the international community to support a just and lasting resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

In many conflict-affected regions, United Nations peacekeepers help protect civilians, support humanitarian assistance and create conditions in which hospitals, schools and basic public services can continue to function. Their work brings stability and hope to communities affected by conflict and displacement.

At a time of growing global uncertainty and conflict, United Nations peacekeeping remains an important instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. Pakistan reaffirms its strong support for UN peacekeeping and expresses solidarity with all peacekeepers serving under the UN flag in pursuit of peace and stability across the world.

The courageous peacekeepers serving across the globe have made extraordinary sacrifices in the service of humanity and global stability. The unwavering dedication of UN peacekeepers to peace is exemplified by the ultimate sacrifice made by more than 4,400 personnel who have lost their lives in the line of duty, including over 181 Pakistani peacekeepers. Pakistan takes immense pride in its martyrs and in all those brave sons and daughters who continue to serve with exceptional professionalism, commitment, and resolve in promoting peace, stability, and the protection of vulnerable communities across different regions of the world.

Pakistan reiterates its steadfast commitment to further strengthening global peace efforts through active participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Our continued contribution reflects Pakistan's enduring commitment to international peace and security, as well as to the principles of multilateralism.



Rasmi

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

From Memory to Responsibility: Beyond the Rhetoric of Victory

The preamble to the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization reminds humanity that since wars began in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must also be constructed. Few statements capture the modern dilemma of nations more profoundly than this. Societies are shaped not merely by military strength or political slogans, but by the intellectual and moral frameworks through which citizens understand history, identity, and conflict.

In my earlier reflections, particularly in My Intellectual Journey from Extremism to Tolerance, I approvingly invoked the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, who observed that war reverses the natural order of life itself, compelling children to bury their parents. That haunting observation continues to resonate because wars rarely end when ceasefires are declared. Their psychological and historical aftershocks linger for generations, shaping collective memory and political imagination alike.

It is precisely for this reason that I have remained a steadfast and vocal critic of the manner in which history is often taught in our part of the world. Historical instruction frequently prioritises emotional mobilisation over scholarly objectivity, producing inherited passions rather than reflective understanding. Instead of encouraging students to critically examine the complexities of the past, educational narratives too often reduce history to simplistic binaries of heroes and villains, glory and humiliation, perpetual victimhood and perpetual suspicion.

Such approaches may generate temporary emotional cohesion, but they rarely cultivate intellectual maturity. Nations cannot build stable futures while remaining imprisoned within emotionally charged interpretations of their past. Responsible historical consciousness requires nuance, self-reflection, and the willingness to distinguish remembrance from resentment.

Against this backdrop, it was genuinely heartening to observe that the recent anniversary associated with the May war inspired reflection in many circles rather than mere triumphalism.

The spirit surrounding "Maarka-e-Haq" appeared, in several educational and civic settings, to move beyond chest-thumping nationalism toward a more thoughtful engagement with national responsibility, resilience, and collective growth.

One particularly meaningful example emerged from Fateh Jang in District Attock, where students, teachers, and members of the local community gathered in a modest yet intellectually vibrant atmosphere of patriotism and historical awareness. Far removed from the noise and spectacle often associated with televised commemorations, the event reflected a quieter and more constructive patriotism.

Students revisited the historical trajectory of the subcontinent — from colonial domination and partition to the evolving realities of the contemporary state. What stood out was not rhetorical aggression, but the seriousness with which many students approached the subject. Their speeches reflected genuine engagement rather than mechanical memorisation. One could sense an emerging awareness that patriotism need not depend upon hostility toward others, nor historical memory upon inherited

bitterness. Equally significant was the tone of the programme itself. It consciously avoided glorifying conflict or perpetuating narratives of perpetual enmity. Instead, remembrance was framed as a moral and civic responsibility. The underlying message was unmistakable: the purpose of history is not to cultivate anger, but to cultivate understanding.

This distinction matters immensely in societies where historical narratives often shape political attitudes, social behaviour, and intergenerational perceptions. When history is taught responsibly, it can strengthen democratic culture, civic ethics, and national cohesion. When taught irresponsibly, it can deepen polarisation and perpetuate intellectual stagnation.

As the programme concluded, one realisation became increasingly difficult to ignore: the defining "Maarka-e-Haq" of our age no longer lies primarily on battlefields. It lies in classrooms, libraries, universities, and spaces of public discourse — where nations either nurture informed, balanced, and ethically conscious citizens, or surrender future generations to ignorance, emotional manipulation, and historical illiteracy.

If we genuinely seek to honour the sacrifices associated with our national history, then remembrance alone is insufficient. We must equip younger generations with education, historical understanding, intellectual discipline, and civic responsibility. Lasting national dignity cannot emerge solely from military memory; it must also emerge from enlightened citizenship and moral seriousness.

History should not become a prison of emotions. It should become a source of wisdom.

The writer is an educator and social awareness advocate who writes on education, civic consciousness, and social reform. He tweets at @ToleranceAdvocate



Analysis

Muhammad Rabnawaz Awan

Iran War Triggers Global Economic Shockwaves, Reshapes Geopolitics



Author Rabail Zareen



Co-Author Dr. Hasan Yaser Malik

Since the invasion of Iran by U.S.-Israel on 28 Feb 2026 the global geopolitics, maritime geopolitics, diplomacy, and economy has been suffering. On geopolitical and diplomatic front new World Order is emerging where China and Russia seems to be taking the lead over the U.S. It will be vital to recall that during 2002 U.S. considered it self so strong that it adopted 'Pre-emption Policy' in Sep 2002 to initiate a 'Preventive' war against a nation that even poses a threat to the U.S. The doctrine of pre-emption being unjust offended other powers, who continued their efforts to build economic and military muscles. On the other hand pursuance of the policy brought U.S. under severe economic implications and forced U.S. to adopt a new 'Defense Strategy' just to Sustain its Global leadership to offset the Chinese influence in energy rich Indian Ocean Region. By cutting down its defense budget to U.S \$ 987 billion over a decade and

to maintain its domination in IOR against the China by shifting 60% of its naval resources in Asia Pacific Region by remaining poised towards Indian and Pacific Oceans including South China Sea. However presently due to diminishing facet of petro dollar, U.S. losing its influence over NATO and Europe, trade contest with China and its recent war on Iran has particular made it impossible for U.S. to even sustain its global leadership. The recent U.S.-Israel war on Iran is making it difficult for the U.S. to maintain its influence in Indian Ocean. The two sided closure of it taking more toll on European and the U.S. economy over Middle Eastern economy.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz in 2026 has imposed significant economic losses on both Europe and the U.S. due to its pivotal role in global oil and natural gas trade. This strategic chokepoint normally carries around 20% of global oil and a substantial share of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for Europe through Bab-El Mandeb Strait through which 10 to 12 % of global trade passes. Following the outbreak of the U.S.-Israel and Iran conflict in February 2026, shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has reduced down to 90%, out which only 10 to 15 million barrels of oil is passing instead of 21 million barrels per day before the conflict. Europe and Americas are getting only about 2 million barrels which is not even 50 % of their imports from ME. Hydrocarbon flow Europe is further vulnerable due to Iranian influence over the Strait of Bab-El Mandeb. The conflict has triggered one of the largest energy shocks since the 1970s, with oil prices surging above \$ U.S. 120 per barrel, sharply increasing production and transportation costs across Western economies.

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Masjid Rehmatil Alameen F-8/4, Islamabad

Hundreds of Animals Sacrificed, Thousands Fed as Community Spirit Shines This Eid

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: True to its annual tradition, Masjid Rehmat-ul-Alameen in Sector E-8/4, Islamabad, once again turned Eid-ul-Adha into a festival of compassion this year. Hundreds of animals were sacrificed under the mosque's organized Qurbani program, and thousands of freshly cooked meals were served to deserving families, daily wage workers, students, and low-income households across the federal capital.

What began years ago as a modest community effort has now grown into one of the most organized charity drives in the city. This year's campaign not only honored the religious spirit of sacrifice but also addressed a very real need: ensuring that no family in the locality spent Eid without food on their table.

A Well-Organized Qurbani Operation

For three days, the mosque premises became a center of coordinated activity. The entire process followed strict Islamic and hygiene standards. Qualified butchers supervised by the mosque committee handled the slaughter, while volunteers managed skinning, cutting, and packaging. Separate areas were designated for slaughtering, washing, and packing to maintain cleanliness and avoid congestion. Medical waste and animal remains were disposed of through arrangements with CDA sanitation teams, keeping the surrounding area clean despite the scale of the operation.

"Organization is the key when you're handling this volume," said a senior committee member. "We start planning months before Eid. Every animal is registered, every donor is given a receipt, and every packet of meat is accounted for so it reaches the right people."

Community Kitchen: Fresh Meals for Thousands

Alongside raw meat distribution, Masjid Rehmat-ul-Alameen ran a community kitchen throughout Eid. Large deghs were set up in the opposite of mosque, and professional cooks along with dozens of volunteers prepared fresh meals twice daily.

The menu was simple but hearty: Qurbani meat curry and roti. Meals were served to thou-



sands of people who gathered in an organized queue. Separate seating and serving areas were arranged for men, women, and families to maintain privacy and comfort.

Students from nearby universities, security guards, rickshaw drivers, and laborers working on construction sites were among the regular visitors. For many, it was the only proper Eid meal they could afford.

A university student who benefited from the kitchen said, "Most of us live away from home. On Eid the hostels feel empty. Coming here and eating with others gives us the feeling

Volunteers: The Backbone of the Drive

Young volunteers said the experience taught them the real meaning of Eid. "We spend Eid morning serving instead of just visiting relatives. It's tiring, but when you see a child smile after eating, it feels worth it," one volunteer noted.

The mosque committee coordinated the volunteers in shifts, provided refreshments, and ensured safety protocols were followed.

Spirit of Qurbani Beyond Ritual

Islamic scholars who addressed the congregation

during Eid prayers at the mosque emphasized that Qurbani is not merely a ritual of slaughter. It is a test of sharing, empathy, and social responsibility.

"The meat does not reach Allah, nor does the blood. What reaches Him is your piety and your care for His creation," the Imam reminded worshippers. This message was reflected in the mosque's actions, where the focus remained on ensuring the benefits of sacrifice reached those most in need.

Challenges and the Way Forward

Organizing a drive of this scale comes with challenges. Managing hundreds of animals, ensuring



hygiene, coordinating hundreds of volunteers, and maintaining transparency in distribution requires months of planning and resources. Rising costs of livestock and cooking materials also put pressure on the budget each year.

Yet the mosque committee says community trust and donor support make it possible. Many donors now give advance pledges, and several welfare organizations have partnered with the mosque to expand the reach.

For the future, the committee is considering digital registration for donors and beneficiaries to make distribution even more

transparent, and expanding the community kitchen to operate beyond Eid for deserving families year-round.

Conclusion

This Eid-ul-Adha, Masjid Rehmat-ul-Alameen E-8/4 once again proved that the spirit of sacrifice is strongest when it translates into service. Hundreds of animals were offered, but the real sacrifice was made by volunteers who gave their time, donors who gave their wealth, and organizers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes.

For thousands of people in Islamabad, the mosque did more than facilitate a religious

duty – it delivered dignity, food, and the feeling of being remembered. As one recipient put it while collecting his packet, "This is not just meat. This is someone remembering us on Eid."

In a city where inequality is often visible, initiatives like this remind us that compassion, when organized collectively, can feed thousands and uplift entire communities. Masjid Rehmat-ul-Alameen's annual drive stands as a model of how religious institutions can play a vital role in social welfare, turning the occasion of Qurbani into a true celebration for all.

Photos by Sultan Bashir

Youm-e-Takbeer Symbolizes Pakistan's Sovereignty and Invincible Defense: Ibrahim Hasan Murad

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chairman and President of University of Management and Technology (UMT), Ibrahim Hasan Murad, extended heartfelt congratulations to the nation on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbeer, stating that May 28, 1998, remains an unforgettable day in Pakistan's history when the country emerged as a nuclear power and made its

defense impregnable.

He said that Youm-e-Takbeer is not merely a historic day, but a symbol of national dignity, sovereignty, and defense strength. Through its strong defense capabilities, Pakistan proved to the world that it possesses the determination and ability to safeguard its national interests.

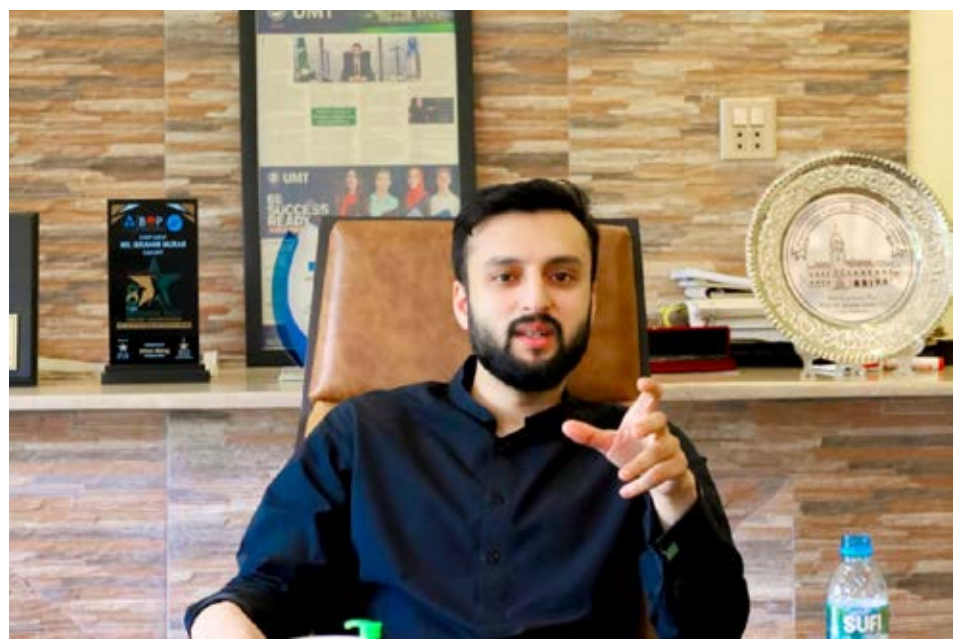
Ibrahim Hasan Murad stated that even after 28 years, Paki-

stan's defense remains strong, secure, and unconquerable, which reflects the result of national unity, visionary military leadership, and scientific excellence.

Paying tribute to Mohsin-e-Pakistan Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, he said that Dr. A. Q. Khan, through his remarkable abilities, dedication, and sacrifices, provided Pakistan with an invincible defense. The

nation will always remember his invaluable services and contributions.

Chairman UMT prayed that Allah Almighty may elevate the ranks of Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan and bless Pakistan with lasting peace, progress, and stability. He further stated that Youm-e-Takbeer conveys a message of unity, self-confidence, and renewed commitment towards strengthening national security.



Fuel Goes Up Overnight: Tobacco Stays Cheap Why?

Tehreem Akhtar Qureshi

Your petrol bill went up again. You felt it at the pump, in the rickshaw fare, in the price of a loaf of bread that crossed town on a diesel truck. Maybe you told your family to cut back this month. Maybe you just did the math in your head and said nothing. Either way, you noticed.

That same week, somewhere near a school in your city, a teenager bought a cigarette, or a mango-flavoured vape, for less than the price of a snack. No minister called a press conference. No inflation chart went viral. No one said a word.

That silence is not an accident. It is a policy choice. And it is costing us more than we are willing to admit.

When fuel prices rise, the machinery of government moves fast. Economists appear on television. Opposition parties find their voices. Subsidies get debated. Committees are formed. We

treat petrol prices as a measure of national health, and in fairness, they are. Fuel powers transport, agriculture, and industry. Its cost ripples through everything.

But I keep coming back to a question nobody seems to answer: if we are this sensitive to the cost of things that harm our economy, why are we so quiet about the cost of things that are killing our people?

Tobacco kills approximately 8 million people every year, according to the World Health Organization. That number does not shrink. It does not fluctuate with election cycles or commodity prices. It just keeps coming, year after year, larger than most wars, most famines, most pandemics running in any given year. And yet, across country after country, a pack of cigarettes remains easier to afford than a decent meal.

Governments tax fuel because it works. Higher prices reduce consumption, generate revenue, and push people toward alternatives. This is not controversial economic logic. We apply it

to petrol, diesel, and gas without blinking.

The same logic applies to tobacco. The evidence is not new, and it is not contested. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, a global health treaty ratified by over 180 countries, spells it out clearly in Article 6: tobacco taxes are among the most effective tools for reducing consumption, particularly among young people and lower-income populations. When cigarettes become more expensive, fewer people start smoking. Fewer people starting means fewer deaths. The arithmetic is not complicated.

And yet, tobacco tax policy lags decades behind fuel tax policy. Tobacco companies are among the most profitable corporations on earth because they have spent decades successfully lobbying to keep their products cheap, addictive, and everywhere. The result is a system where the cost of driving is adjusted in real time to reflect market realities, while the cost of smoking is quietly kept low

enough to keep the next generation hooked.

Here is something that rarely appears in our domestic policy conversation: Pakistan is not a bystander to this global debate. Pakistan ratified the WHO FCTC in 2004, making it one of the early signatories among developing nations, and one of 182 countries that have now joined what remains the first international public health treaty negotiated under the WHO.

That ratification was not symbolic. It was a binding commitment. And the treaty is specific about what that commitment includes.

Pakistan has not met that 75% threshold. As of 2024 to 2025, Federal Excise Duty on cigarettes still falls significantly below the WHO-recommended benchmark. The tobacco industry's favourite counter-argument, that higher taxes fuel illicit trade, has already been addressed within the very treaty Pakistan signed. The Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products gives

governments the tools to tackle smuggling without using it as cover for keeping taxes artificially low.

We signed the treaty. We made the commitment. We just have not followed through, while somehow finding the political energy every few months to manage fuel price adjustments down to the last paise.

Walk past any convenience store near any school and you will see exactly what that policy gap looks like in practice. Cigarettes, and increasingly flavoured vapes in mango, mint, and bubblegum, priced just right for a fifteen-year-old's pocket money. This is not a coincidence of commerce.

Young people who begin using tobacco before the age of 18 are far more likely to become long-term, dependent users. The industry knows this. The tools that could break this pipeline, sustained, inflation-adjusted tobacco taxes, remain politically untouched.

A fifteen-year-old in a low-in-

come neighbourhood can afford a cigarette before school, but cannot afford the healthcare that will eventually treat what it does to his lungs.

Treating tobacco-related illness costs national health systems billions each year, in direct medical expenditure, lost productivity, and the premature deaths of working-age adults. These are not speculative projections. They are documented burdens in health budgets across the developing and developed world.

Higher tobacco taxes do not just save lives. They generate revenue that can be directed toward healthcare, education, and cessation programmes. Several countries have implemented exactly this. The outcomes are consistent: consumption falls, revenue rises, and the pressure on public health systems begins to ease.

The next time a government announces a fuel price adjustment, ask them this: when did you last raise the tobacco tax?

Not a token increase. Not a figure that quietly disappears into inflation within a year. A real, significant, sustained increase, one that makes a cigarette genuinely harder for a first-time teenage buyer to afford.

If the answer is vague, or evasive, or years ago, you have your answer about whose interests are actually being protected.

I do not know when the next fuel price hike will come. But I know that tomorrow morning, another teenager will buy a cigarette outside a school, and no minister will say a word. Fuel prices go up because someone decided they should. Tobacco stays cheap because someone decided it should. Both are choices. One is just more honest about it.

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect Daily The Spokesman's point of view

The writer is BBA Student | Youth Advocate for Tobacco Control

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
173,962.81	171,725.29	
Day's High	Day's Low	
174,106.34	171,545.46	
Index Value	Change	
35,362,971,293	+2237.52	
Percentage	Time	
+1.3%	29 May, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
10,409.28	-16.68	
Percentage	Time	
-0.16%	29 May, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
50,984.82	+315.85	
Percentage	Time	
+0.62%	29 May, 12:26 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
66,329.50	+1,636.38	
Percentage	Time	
+2.53%	29 May, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	196.82	202.68
Bahrain Dinar	729.05	740.75
Canadian Dollar	200.01	205.45
China Yuan	40.05	41.15
Danish Krone	43.35	43.75
Euro	322.87	328.89
Hong Kong Dollar	34.94	35.94
Indian Rupee	2.50	2.75
Japanese Yen	1.7423	1.8424
Kuwaiti Dinar	876.38	887.25
Malaysian Ringgit	67.00	68.15
New Zealand \$	161.80	168.81
Norwegians Krone	27.75	28.05
Omani Riyal	718.48	729.25
Qatari Riyal	74.04	76.02
Saudi Riyal	73.85	74.75
Singapore Dollar	216.03	220.15
Swedish Korona	30.35	30.65
Swiss Franc	352.78	356.68
Thai Bhat	8.5	8.65
U.A.E Dirham	75.55	76.55
UK Pound Sterling	374.08	379.10
US Dollar	278.80	279.55

Nuclear Milestone Reached

Mian Zahid Hussain calls for essential economic reforms

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, a prominent Pakistani business leader, commemorated May 28, 1998, as a historic day when Pakistan became a nuclear power, achieving regional strategic balance.

He credited former Prime Ministers Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, along with scientists and national institutions, for this achievement, which bolstered Pakistan's security against international pressure.

Hussain also highlighted Pakistan's recent military success on May 10, 2025, under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, where Pakistan effectively countered a larger adversary and advanced diplomatically.

He noted Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace and its efforts to become a trade hub through projects like CPEC.



Furthermore, Hussain praised the government's diplomatic handling of the Iran-America conflict, emphasizing the need to leverage defense and diplomatic strengths

for economic stability and self-reliance.

Despite its nuclear status, Pakistan faces economic challenges, including fiscal imbalances and a fragile economy, though recent macroeconomic measures have shown some positive signs. Hussain expressed concern over revenue shortfalls, a widening fiscal deficit, and high public debt, which heavily impacts development spending.

He urged the government to implement strict fiscal discipline, broaden the tax base, and focus on structural reforms, digitalization, energy sector improvements, and attracting foreign investment in the upcoming budget.

Hussain concluded by calling for the same national unity and political will that secured Pakistan's defense to be channeled into economic revival and development, making the nation economically as strong as it is defensively.

PIBF Welcomes Pakistan-China MoUs, Calls for Economic Reforms to Ensure Sustainable Growth

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Pak International Business Forum (PIBF) has expressed optimism regarding the recently signed MoUs between Pakistan and China across various sectors, including industry, energy, infrastructure, technology, agriculture, and trade.

PIBF President Dr. Mushtaq Mangat views these agreements as a positive stride in fortifying bilateral economic cooperation, signaling growing international confidence in Pakistan's economic prospects.

He believes these pacts can foster industrial expansion, technology transfer, job creation, and increased exports.

However, Dr. Mangat emphasized that for these agreements to translate into sustainable prosperity, practical economic reforms are crucial.

He highlighted significant challenges faced by Pakistan's business community, such as high electricity and gas tariffs, rising petroleum prices, elevated interest rates, and complex taxation.

To remain globally competitive, industries require a reduced cost of doing business. PIBF Secretary General Muhammad

Ejaz Tanveer echoed these sentiments, stressing the need for structural reforms to rebuild investor confidence and bolster domestic industries alongside foreign investment agreements.

He identified affordable energy as vital for industrial revitalization, warning that without cost reductions and stable economic policies, industries will persist in their struggles, and foreign investment may not yield its full potential.

Tanveer urged the government to adopt PIBF's seven-point economic revival agenda, which advocates for lower interest rates, the rebirth of Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), support for exporters and SMEs, a wider tax base with reduced rates, a simplified tax system, competitive energy tariffs, and improved governance in economic and energy sectors.

The PIBF leadership concluded that Pakistan's considerable economic potential can only be fully realized through policy consistency, economic stability, and business-friendly initiatives, especially when leveraging international partnerships and investment opportunities.

Preserving the Animal skin

RAWALPINDI: Workers collect sacrificial animal skins with salt after the cleaning and preserving process at their workplace at Jamia Masjid Road in the city.



Photo: Online

ABHI Microfinance Bank Reports Strong Turnaround in 2025

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: ABHI Microfinance Bank achieved a record profit after tax of PKR 1.019 billion in 2025, a significant turnaround from a PKR 1.754 billion loss in 2024. This remarkable recovery, the bank's first profit since 2020, was driven by robust balance sheet growth, with total assets nearly doubling to PKR 77,066 billion. Advances surged by 104.25% to PKR 37,556 billion, supported by a 90.71% increase in deposits to PKR 69,088 billion. Total revenue rose by 50.66% to PKR 14.25 billion, while credit losses significantly reduced, with the NPL ratio dropping to 0.68%. The bank also strengthened its capital and governance, investing in risk management and compliance, and continued its digital transformation strategy, focusing on digital lending and technology-led customer access. ABHI Microfinance Bank ended 2025 in a much stronger financial and operational position.

Govt mulls salary and pension hike in 2026-27 budget

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government is preparing the 2026-27 budget, which includes proposals for government employees and pensioners. Key measures under consideration are salary and pension increases of 5-10%, merging ad hoc allowances into basic pay, and a possible rise in the minimum wage. A disparity allowance for grades 1-16 is also proposed to combat inflation. Pension increases might be based on the average of the past two years' inflation. The government has also requested the IMF to allow a tax burden reduction for salaried individuals. The National Assembly and Senate are scheduled to debate the budget on June 5, with a revised date from an earlier June 1 proposal due to lawmakers performing Hajj. These proposals will be presented to the federal cabinet before being submitted for parliamentary approval.

UBL Arranges Pakistan's Largest Short-Term Rated Unsecured Sukuk of PKR 25 Billion for Engro Fertilizers

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: United Bank Limited (UBL), acting as Mandated Lead Advisor and Arranger, has successfully arranged Pakistan's largest short-term, rated, unsecured, privately placed Sukuk, raising PKR 25 billion for Engro Fertilizers Limited.

The landmark transaction represents another significant milestone in Pakistan's Islamic capital markets and reinforces UBL's position as a leading arranger of innovative Shariah-compliant financing solutions for the country's corporate sector.

Following the successful closure of one of the largest private-sector Islamic financing transactions in Pakistan for the Engro Group's Deodar acquisition, UBL once again partnered with the Group to deliver a market-leading Islamic financing solution. To commemorate the successful completion of the Sukuk issuance, a ceremony was held at the Engro office, attended by representatives of Engro Group and United Bank Limited. The event was attended by Mr. Farooq



Barkat Ali, Group CFO, Engro Holdings; Mr. Muhammad Imran Khalil, CFO, Engro Fertilizers Limited, Ms. Nadia Tabassum, Group Executive-Corporate

& Investment Banking Group, UBL; Mr. Mishal Quadri, Head of Investment Banking, UBL; and members of their respective teams.

SBP asks commercial banks to observe extended hours on Friday, Saturday to facilitate taxpayers

KARACHI: For facilitation in tax collection, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday asked all commercial banks to observe extended working hours on Friday and Saturday, May 29 and 30, 2026, along with ensuring uninterrupted availability of their online payment channels.

The central bank has taken the decision on the request of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), to facilitate taxpayers in making over-the-counter (OTC) payment of Government duties and taxes, said a statement issued here.

"All branches of commercial banks shall observe extended working

hours until 05:30 P.M. on Friday, May 29, 2026. All Saturday-opening branches of commercial banks shall remain open from 09:00 A.M. to 05:30 P.M. on Saturday, May 30, 2026," it reads.

To facilitate the online tax payments, the banks shall also ensure uninterrupted availability of their online payment channels i.e. internet banking, mobile applications, ATMs, and other digital platforms.

The SBP further advised banks to keep their concerned branches open on May 30, 2026 for as long as required to facilitate the Special Clearing for Government transactions conducted by NIFT.

National Economic Council meeting likely on June 3 ahead of Federal Budget 2026-27 approval process

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government is expected to convene a meeting of the National Economic Council (NEC) on June 3 as part of preparations for the Federal Budget 2026-27, official sources said on Friday.

According to sources, the meeting—likely to be chaired by the Prime Minister—will review and approve key budgetary proposals, national development priorities and macroeconomic targets for the upcoming fiscal year.

The NEC, which includes the chief ministers of all four provinces along with federal representatives, is the country's top constitutional

forum for approving overall development planning and economic direction.

Sources said the council will approve the national development budget for the new fiscal year, along with federal and provincial Public Sector Development Programmes (PSDPs), which outline major infrastructure and development projects across the country.

The meeting is also expected to finalize key macroeconomic indicators, including the national economic growth target for the next fiscal year, which will be formally presented for approval before the council. Officials said recommendations

prepared by the Annual Planning Coordination Committee will also be placed before the NEC for endorsement. These recommendations typically form the groundwork for development priorities and sector-wise allocations in the federal budget.

Sources added that the approval of both federal and provincial development programmes in the NEC is a crucial step before the final presentation of the federal budget in Parliament.

The upcoming meeting is expected to play a central role in shaping fiscal direction, investment priorities and development spending for the 2026-27 financial year.



Pakistan and Australia will Three One Day International Match Series Starting From today at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium: PCB Official

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Australia will feature in a three-match One Day International Match Series commencing from Saturday 30 May at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. The second One Day International Match will be staged at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Tuesday 2 June, while the third One Day International Match will be played at the same venue on Thursday 4 June.

All Three One Day International Matches will Begin at 4.30pm Pakistan Standard Time

Pakistan will be captained by Shaheen Shah Afridi, while the tourists will be led by Josh Inglis. The first One Day International at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium will be Pakistan's 1,000th One Day International Match Pakistan who played their first One Day International Match against New Zealand in Christchurch in 1973. have so far played 999 ODI matches, winning 527 and losing 442. Nine matches ended in a tie, while 21 matches ended with no result.

In the Head-to-Head Record, third-ranked Australia have played 111 One Day International Matches against fifth-ranked Pakistan. Pakistan have won 36 matches, while Australia have emerged victorious on 71 occasions.

Three matches ended with no result, while one match was tied.

Pakistan have won each of the last two bilateral One Day International Match Series between the sides by a 2-1 margin. Australia toured Pakistan for a three-match One Day International Match series in 2022, which the hosts won 2-1. Then in November 2024, Pakistan toured Australia for a three-match One Day International Match series, which the visitors won 2-1.

Talking to PCB Digital on the eve of the series, Shaheen Shah Afridi said "The first One Day International Match in Rawalpindi will be a special occasion as it marks Pakistan's 1,000th One Day International Match. It is an important milestone in our cricket history and we would like to celebrate it with a strong performance against Australia."

"Australia are one of the strongest teams in world cricket and contests between the two sides have always been highly competitive. Our preparations for the series have been good. The players have worked hard during the training camp and everyone is eager to contribute towards the team's success. We have a talented group that combines experience with exciting young players."

"We have enjoyed success against

Australia in the last two bilateral ODI series and that gives us confidence, but we understand that every series presents a new challenge. Our focus is on executing our plans well and maintaining consistency throughout the three matches."

"Playing at Rawalpindi and Lahore is always special because of the passionate support we receive from the fans. Their encouragement motivates us to give our best on the field and we hope to provide them with an entertaining brand of cricket."

Broadcast Details

For the first time, the PCB will live-stream the matches on PCB's OTT platform "PCB Live" in Pakistan. More details on PCB OTT platform is available here. The three ODIs will also be broadcast live on PTV Sports across the country.

Fans can also witness the action on "PCB Live" in Europe, UK, North America, Caribbean and Africa. For viewers abroad, Fox Sports (Australia), T Sports and Tapmad (Bangladesh), Willow (North America), Cricbuzz (MENA) and Dialog (Sri Lanka) will broadcast the action.

The commentary panel will feature former Test captains Aamir Sohail and Ramiz Raja, who will be joined by former Test cricketer Bazid Khan



and former Pakistan women's captain Urooj Mumtaz. Former Australia Test batter Greg Blewett will also be part

of the commentary team. Zainab Abbas is set to present the PCB's famous PitchSide Studio during

the pre- and post-match shows for all three matches of the series.

Pakistan Cricket Team 16-Member Squad

Shaheen Shah Afridi (captain) Salman Ali Agha (vice-captain) Abdul Samad, Abrar Ahmed, Ahmed Daniyal, Arafat Minhas, Babar Azam, Haris Rauf, Maaz Sadaqat, Muhammad Ghazi Ghorri (wicket-keeper) Naseem Shah, Rohail Nazir (wicket-keeper) Sahibzada Farhan, Shadab Khan, Shamyul Hussain and Sufyan Moqim

Team Management

Naveed Akram Cheema (Manager) Mike Hesson (Head Coach) Ashley Noffke (Bowling Coach), Hanif Malik (Batting Coach) Shane McDermott (Fielding Coach) Iftikhar (Physiotherapist) Grant Luden (strength and conditioning Coach) Talha Ejaz (Analyst) Syed Naeem Ahmad (Media manager) Col. Usman Anwari (Security Manager) Dr Wajid Ali Rafai (Team Doctor) and Muhammad Ehsan (Masseur)

Series Schedule (All Matches to Begin at 4.30pm Pakistan Local Time)

30 May – 1st One Day International Match at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium
2 June – 2nd One Day International Match at Gaddafi Stadium Lahore
4 June – 3rd One Day International Match at Gaddafi Stadium Lahore

Nolberto Solano name 23-Man squad for Diamond Jubilee Int'l Football Tournament

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Men's National Football Team Head Coach Nolberto Solano has named a 23-man squad for the Diamond Jubilee International Football Tournament, to be held in Male, Maldives from June 1 to 10.

The team is set to depart on May 30. Pakistan will lock horns against hosts Maldives, Bangladesh and Afghanistan in the four-nation tournament, which will be played at the National

Football Stadium, said a press release issued here on Friday.

The Shaheens open their campaign against Bangladesh on 1 June before facing Maldives on 4 June and Afghanistan on 7 June, with the final scheduled for 10 June.

The squad sees the return of several experienced internationals, including Yousuf Butt, Easah Suliman, Mamoon Moosa, Muhammad Fazal, Ali Shah and Ali Niazi. Adil Nabi also features in the final selection, while Ali Khan receives his maiden call-up to the



senior national side.

The squad included – Goalkeepers: Saqib Hanif, Yousuf Butt, Hassan Ali; Defenders: Abdullah Iqbal, Mohammad Fazal, Abdullah Shah, Easah Suliman, Mohib Afridi,

Mamoon Moosa, Ali Niazi, Haris Zeb; Midfielders: Adil Nabi, Rahis Nabi, Alamgir Ghazi, Hayyan Khattak, Ali Agha, Otis Khan; Forwards: Shayak Dost, Umer Nawaz, Ali Shah, Ali Khan, Samad Arshad, Harun Hamid.

Sahibzada Farhan only pre-signed Pakistani player in Lanka Premier League

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The five franchises of the Lanka Premier League (LPL) have unveiled their pre-signed players ahead of the sixth edition of the tournament, set to be played from 17 July to 18 August across Colombo, Pallekele and Dambulla.

The teams will complete the remainder of their squads during the official Player Draft scheduled for 1 June in Colombo.

Among the headline signings, Dambulla Sixers have secured one of the breakout stars of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, Sahibzada Farhan. The explosive Pakistan batter enjoyed a sensational tournament, smashing



a record 383 runs in seven matches including two centuries and two fifties. He will be joined by experienced South African opener Reeza Hendricks alongside Sri Lankan stars Dinesh Chandimal and Dushmantha Chameera, giving the

Sixers a formidable core.

Four-time champions Jaffna Kings have strengthened their squad with Bangladesh superstar Shakib Al Hasan and fast bowler Taskin Ahmed, while Bhanuka Rajapaksa and Dunith Wellalage continue to provide strong local firepower.

Kandy Royals, champions of the 2023 edition, have assembled one of the most balanced line-ups with Wanindu Hasaranga, Moeen Ali and Angelo Mathews. Adding further depth is Indian all-rounder Vijay Shankar, whose signing is expected to create significant excitement among fans. A technically sound batter with the ability to contribute

crucial overs, Vijay Shankar brings valuable international and IPL experience to the Royals setup. His calm presence, versatility and big-match exposure make him one of the most notable additions for the upcoming season.

Colombo Kaps have also made a major statement in the pre-signing window by bringing in New Zealand star Jimmy Neesham and Australian power-hitter Ben McDermott to partner Sri Lankan batting stars Kusal Mendis and Kamindu Mendis. Neesham's reputation as a proven global T20 match-winner and McDermott's explosive batting ability add tremendous strength and firepower to the Colombo franchise.

Islamabad issues traffic advisory ahead of Pakistan-Australia ODI

Sports Desk

Islamabad Traffic Police on Thursday issued a special traffic advisory for residents of the twin cities ahead of the arrival and movement of cricket teams for the upcoming Pakistan-Australia ODI series starting from 30th May. According to a police spokesperson, temporary traffic diversions will be imposed at different times on Club Road, Murree Road, the Expressway, and Srinagar Highway, which may disrupt the normal flow of traffic on these routes.

Authorities advised citizens to leave their homes 20 to 25 minutes earlier than usual while travelling and use alternative routes or service roads during diversion periods to avoid inconvenience.

The spokesperson said traffic personnel would be deployed at various points to assist commuters and ensure smooth traffic movement across the capital and adjoining areas.

Residents were also urged to stay updated through the Islamabad Traffic Police WhatsApp channel, social media platforms, and FM 92.4 for the latest traffic information.

The advisory comes ahead of the first ODI between the Pakistan national cricket team and Australia, scheduled to be played at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on May 30, with increased traffic pressure expected in the twin cities.

Pakistan-Australia ODI series crucial for World Cup preparations: Mike Hesson

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's head coach Mike Hesson has said that the upcoming ODI series against Australia is of great significance for the national team, and the team management is focused on building a balanced and strong combination ahead of the next World Cup.

Speaking to media at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, Hesson said the national side had made progress on several fronts in white-ball cricket recently.

He added that the series against a strong team like Australia would provide an excellent opportunity for players to further sharpen their skills.

Hesson stated that the management aims to form a strong team combining young and experienced players capable of delivering consistent performances in future global tournaments.

He noted that effective bowling in the powerplay, better strategy in the middle overs, and aggressive yet responsible batting are essential requirements of modern ODI cricket.

Trump's War of Contradictions

Continued from Page 4

by major economies to develop alternatives. If that trend continues, the ability of the United States to compel compliance through economic pressure could diminish significantly.

At the heart of the current crisis lies another controversial demand: Trump's insistence that

several Muslim-majority countries support or join the Abraham Accords framework as part of a broader regional settlement. Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, and Jordan each face distinct domestic realities.

Public opinion throughout much of the Muslim world remains heavily influenced by the Palestinian issue. Critics

argue that linking normalization with Israel to an Iran settlement creates an additional obstacle rather than a pathway to peace. Supporters argue that broader regional integration is essential for long-term stability. The debate continues, but the political difficulty of imposing such conditions is undeniable.

Three months into the conflict,

the most important issue may no longer be whether America possesses sufficient military or economic power. Few seriously question what it does. The more important question is whether Washington can maintain a coherent strategy long enough to translate power into sustainable political results. Allies require consistency. Adversaries require

clarity. Investors require predictability. Diplomatic agreements require trust.

From missed deadlines and contradictory statements to market-moving announcements, shifting negotiation frameworks, and ongoing military tensions, the period between February and May has produced what many now describe as a crisis of cred-

ibility. Scott Ritter's analysis may be controversial, and many of his conclusions remain vigorously disputed.

Yet his central warning resonates far beyond his supporters: a superpower's greatest strength is not merely its military arsenal or economic influence, but the confidence that others place in its word. In international affairs, power

commands attention. Credibility commands trust. And without trust, even the most powerful nation can struggle to achieve its goals.

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

Iran War Triggers Global Economic Shockwaves, Reshapes Geopolitics

Continued from Page 4

In Europe, natural gas prices nearly doubled to above € 60/MWh, while energy inflation rose by 11%, contributing to near economic stagnation with GDP growth of only 0.1% in early 2026. Industrial sectors such as chemicals and steel have faced cost increases of up to 30%, forcing production cuts and raising the risk of deindustrialization. The

European Central Bank has also reduced growth forecasts to below 1%, warning of possible stagflation if disruptions persist.

The United States, while less dependent on Middle Eastern imports, has still experienced indirect losses through global market disruptions. Higher oil prices have increased inflationary pressures, disrupted supply chains, and created volatility in financial markets. Addi-

tionally, the war's inflationary effects such as rising U. S. fuel prices (over \$ U. S 4 per gallon) and broader supply chain shocks are weakening the purchasing power and global attractiveness of the dollar. Overall, the closure has slowed global economic growth from an expected 3.4% to around 3.1%, with risks of falling to 2%, indicating near-recession conditions.

The ongoing U. S.-Israel war

on Iran since 28 Feb 2026 is significantly affecting the petrodollar system, which has underpinned U. S. global economic dominance since the 1970s. The petrodollar refers to the practice of pricing and trading oil primarily in U. S. dollars, ensuring global demand for the currency. However, recent geopolitical and energy disruptions are weakening this system. The conflict has pushed oil prices

above to \$ U. S 120 per barrel, increasing volatility in global energy markets. While high oil prices can temporarily increase dollar demand, however it is gradually leading to de-dollarization trends. Iran has actively encouraged oil trade in alternative currencies, particularly the Chinese yuan, especially for countries seeking safe passage through contested waters. At the same time, China, Russia, and

BRICS economies are expanding non-dollar energy trade mechanisms, signalling structural shifts away from dollar dominance. It has been evaluated that if the conflict it could shatter the petrodollar architecture and accelerate a transition toward a multipolar currency system.

Consequently in the domain of maritime geopolitics the U. S navy is losing its influence in South China Sea despite the

initiatives like QUAD, AUKUS and Five Eyes etc. and is trying to consolidate along the 5th Island Chain in Djibouti where as China is further limiting the already Ocean fixed U. S along 6th Island Chain in Atlantic. It is being defined and understood the longer the war more the U. S would suffer in geopolitical, diplomatic and economic domain hence allowing others to fill in the ever expanding gap.

Beautiful view of sunset

ISLAMABAD: An eye-catching view of sunset in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan pays tribute to invaluable contributions rendered by Blue Helmets: ISPR

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has paid rich tribute to the invaluable contributions and ultimate sacrifices rendered by the "Blue Helmets" for the sacred cause of global peace on the momentous occasion of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.

In a statement issued on Friday, the military's media wing, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Pakistan's association with UN peacekeeping transcends six decades, reflecting its steadfast



commitment to international peace. Since 1960, over 237,000 Pakistani peacekeepers have served on UN missions world-

wide, while 183 brave Pakistanis gave the ultimate sacrifice of their lives in service to UN peacekeeping efforts.

The ISPR said Pakistani blue helmets are currently deployed in high-risk theatres including the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), South Sudan (UNMISS), and the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) where they are performing a wide array of multidimensional operations ranging from active military operations to combating climate-driven challenges.

The ISPR reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the ideas and objectives of the United Nations Peacekeeping operations by investing in

peace through a multifaceted commitment encompassing human capital, state-of-the-art training facilities, and systemic capacity building.

It said Pakistan stands resolute alongside the United Nations, reminding the global community that enduring peace is not a guaranteed phenomenon but requires continuous, collective investment.

The ISPR said Pakistan reiterates its foundational resolve to act as the vanguard for international stability, security and humanitarian relief under the United Nations flag.

Punjab launches largest-ever special cleanup operation ahead of Eidul Azha

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched what is being described as the largest special cleanup operation in the province's history ahead of Eidul Azha.

A live monitoring system for the province-wide cleanup drive has been activated, while, for the first time, a direct reporting mechanism linked with eight different sources and departments has also been made functional.

On the chief minister's directives, deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners have taken to the field to supervise the operation in Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur and Sahiwal districts.

Teams and workers of the "Suthra



Punjab" programme have been deployed across streets and neighbourhoods, while special cleanliness operations were carried out early in the

morning at mosques, Eidgahs, graveyards, markets, roads and residential areas.

Routes leading to mosques and

Eidgahs were cleaned, roads were washed and marked with lime, while special arrangements were made at tehsil and district hospitals. Assistant commissioners and deputy commissioners are also conducting visits to review arrangements.

Special monitoring teams have been activated to prevent the dumping of animal waste and remains in streets and markets. Authorities warned that violators could face fines of up to Rs50,000 for disposing of offal and waste at prohibited places.

Officials said streets and markets would be cleaned with phenyl and sprayed with rose water during the Eid holidays.

Camps under the "Suthra Punjab" initiative have also been established in 4,000 union councils across the prov-

Sheikh Dr. Baleelah to lead Jumuah prayers at Masjid Al Haram, Sheikh Dr. Qasim at Masjid Al Nabawi



News Desk

MAKKAH: Sheikh Dr. Bandar bin Abdulaziz Baleelah will lead the Friday (Jumuah) prayers at Masjid Al Haram, while Sheikh Dr. Abdul Muhsin bin Muhammad Al Qasim will lead the prayers at Masjid Al Nabawi.

According to details released by the administrative authorities of the Haramain Sharifain, these prominent scholars have been appointed as the Khatibs and Imams for today's Jumuah prayers, 12th Dhul Hijjah 1447 AH, corresponding to May 29, 2026.

Under this directive, Sheikh Dr.

Bandar bin Abdulaziz Baleelah is performing the duties of leading the Friday prayers and delivering the sermon (Khutbah) at Masjid Al Haram in Makkah. Meanwhile, at Masjid Al Nabawi in Madinah, Sheikh Dr. Abdul Muhsin bin Muhammad Al Qasim is privileged to lead the Jumuah prayers and deliver the sermon.

Officials stated that in view of the blessed days of Hajj, comprehensive arrangements have been finalized across both holy mosques to accommodate the massive gatherings of pilgrims, ensuring that the Friday prayers are offered with the utmost devotion, respect, and in a peaceful environment

Interior Minister commends Saudi Arabia's efforts to serve pilgrims

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Secretary-General of the Muslim World League and Chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars Sheikh Dr Mohammed Al-Issa in Makkah.

During the meeting held at Muslim World League Headquarters in Makkah, a string of topics related to Islamic and regional affairs were discussed.

Mohsin Naqvi commended Saudi



Arabia's efforts in serving pilgrims and the care and attention extended to them.

The interior minister also lauded the Muslim World League's efforts in promoting Islamic awareness.

Two die as gas cylinder blast rips apart Islamabad house

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Two people died while three others injured when a powerful explosion ripped through a house in Islamabad on Friday, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

The explosion caused by a gas cylinder leak destroyed the kitchen located on the first floor of the house in Sector I-10 of the federal capital.

According to the Rescue 1122 offi-

cial, five injured including a woman were rushed to a hospital for treatment where two of them breathed their last.

Police and rescue teams reached the site shortly after the incident and launched relief operations, while an investigation into the cause of the explosion was under way.

According to the director general of Capital Emergency Services, the incident was caused by a substandard gas cylinder.

Gilani pays tribute to Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said that late Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan was a symbol of principled politics, democracy, and national unity.

Addressing a grand public gathering in Khangarh, he said that Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan's services to politics and his sacrifices for democracy would always be remembered. He also congratulated Nawabzada Iftikhar Ahmad Khan on receiving the Nishan-e-Imtiaz on behalf of his late father, according to a news release issued by the Senate here on Friday.

The Chairman further stated that it was a privilege for him to participate in the event held in memory of such a great personality. He remarked that the political and democratic contributions of Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan constituted a bright chapter in Pakistan's history. The grand and historic gathering was organised to celebrate the conferment of Pakistan's highest civil award, the Nishan-e-Imtiaz, upon the late Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan. On the occasion, speakers highlighted in detail the political and democratic struggle of Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and recalled significant historical events associated with his life and career.

The speakers said that Nawabzada

Nasrullah Khan waged a long struggle against authoritarian rule and made unparalleled sacrifices for the promotion of democracy.

He is remembered as the "Father of Democracy" for never compromising on his political principles and for enduring years of imprisonment and political persecution. Special tribute was paid to his resistance and detention during the era of General Zia-ul-Haq.

The gathering also highlighted that Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan's residence was widely regarded as a political academy where many of the country's prominent political leaders sought guidance and mentorship.

The speakers described the Government of Pakistan's decision to award him the Nishan-e-Imtiaz as a significant and commendable national recognition of his services.

Among those attending the event were former Member National Assembly, Mehr Irshad Sial, Members Provincial Assembly Mian Alamdhar Qureshi, Khawaja Rizwan Alam, Mir Asif Khan Dasti, Malik Zahid Hussain Khokhar, Mian Naveed Asghar Makol, Rao Sajid, along with party office-bearers, workers, and a large number of local dignitaries and community members.

Mohsin-e-Pakistan

Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan and the Story of Atomic Self-Reliance

Special Feature | National Pride

When history records how Pakistan secured its defense in the modern era, one name stands at the center: Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan.

Known worldwide as the "Father of Pakistan's Nuclear Program," his journey from a metallurgy student to the architect of the nation's atomic shield is a story of vision, hard work, and unwavering patriotism. Dr. Khan was born in 1936 in Bhopal and migrated to Pakistan after Partition.

After excelling in his studies, he earned advanced degrees in metallurgical engineering from Europe. In the 1970s, while working at a uranium enrichment facility in the Netherlands,

he mastered centrifuge technology — the key to producing enriched uranium.

At that time, Pakistan faced a critical challenge after India's 1974 nuclear test. Sensing the danger, Dr. Khan returned home in 1976 and offered his expertise to the nation.

The government accepted, and under his leadership the Kahuta Research Laboratories, KRL, was born. What made Dr. Khan's contribution unique was his focus on self-reliance. Instead of depending on foreign help, he built a team of Pakistani scientists and engineers and trained them to design and manufacture gas centrifuges locally.

Despite international sanctions, technology bans, and intense surveil-

lance, KRL progressed rapidly. By the 1980s, Pakistan had mastered uranium enrichment. The laboratory became more than a facility — it became a university of science, producing thousands of skilled engineers and technicians who later served across Pakistan's industries.

The defining moment came in May 1998. After India conducted nuclear tests at Pokhran, the nation looked to Dr. Khan and his team. Within just 17 days, Pakistan responded with five successful nuclear tests at Chagai, Balochistan, on May 28 and 30.

With those blasts, Pakistan entered the world's nuclear club as the 7th nuclear power and the first Muslim

country with atomic capability. The tests created a balance of deterrence in South Asia and sent a clear message: Pakistan's sovereignty was non-negotiable. Dr. Khan later said, "We made the bomb so that no one can ever threaten Pakistan again." Beyond the laboratory, Dr. Khan was deeply committed to the people.

He established scholarships for deserving students, supported hospitals, and promoted science education across the country. His belief was simple: a strong nation needs strong minds.

Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan passed away in October 2021, but his legacy endures in every Pakistani who values independence and dignity. He did not just build a bomb — he built confidence. For giving the nation security without begging for technology, he will always be remembered as Mohsin-e-Pakistan, the Benefactor of Pakistan.



Analysis

Naveed Ahmad Khan