



A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے سختی سے بیان کیا کہ ہم کو عہد الصمد
نے خردی، انہیں عبد اللہ بن شہی نے خبر
دی ان سے ٹھہریں عبد اللہ نے بیان کیا اور
ان سے اس رضی اللہ عنہ نے کہ رسول اللہ
ﷺ نے یہ نبی کی کو سلام کرتے (اور جواب
نہا) تو تین مرتبہ سلام کرتے تھے اور جب
آپ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم کو نبی بات فرماتے تو
(زیادہ سے زیادہ) تین مرتبہ اسے دہراتے۔
(بخاری ص ۱۰۷، حدیث نمبر ۵۳۴۴)

Daily The Spokesman



Pakistan Ulema Council chief lauds Saudi leadership for successful Hajj operation

Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has congratulated the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the successful management of the Hajj season 1447 AH, describing it as an extraordinary achievement made possible through the grace of Almighty Allah and the visionary leadership of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.



No nation achieve sustainable progress without empowering its women: Rana Mashood

The Chairman of Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan said, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif places special emphasis on youth development, particularly the empowerment of young women, and considers them a vital force for the country's future.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Security alerts

ISLAMABAD: Police block the road leading towards Daman e Koh in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

US-Pakistan Relations Flourish: Defense Secretary Hails "True Friendship"

Agencies

WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth stated that a "true friendship" is emerging between Washington and Islamabad, commending Pakistan's leadership, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief General Asim Munir, for their role in fostering peace and supporting ongoing negotiations concerning the Iran conflict.



Iran opens Hormuz to China, Russia; slams Trump

Agencies

TEHRAN: Iran has announced special trade and maritime concessions for China and Russia in the Strait of Hormuz, while senior officials intensified criticism of the United States, accusing President Donald Trump of undermining diplomatic efforts.

Azizi said the decision was made in light of the current regional situation and reflected Iran's commitment to strengthening cooperation with its key partners. He added that Tehran would continue prioritising cooperation with friendly countries to safeguard mutual economic and commercial interests.



during ongoing international negotiations. Azizi said the issue had not been raised in any talks or messages exchanged with the United States and reiterated that Iran would not compromise on its nuclear rights.

Leader and former commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), accused Trump of abandoning diplomacy in favour of confrontation. In a statement posted on X, Rezaei said the US president was "betraying diplomacy for the third time" and argued that Washington's continued maritime blockade and what he described as excessive demands in negotiations demonstrated a lack of commitment to a peaceful settlement.

Speaking to reporters in Tehran, Ibrahim Azizi, chairman of the Iranian parliament's National Security Committee, said Tehran had decided to provide special facilities to Chinese and Russian vessels transiting the strategic waterway.

Referring to recent consultations between Pakistan and Iran, Azizi described the diplomatic engagements as important and constructive. He also dismissed reports suggesting that Iran had discussed transferring enriched uranium to another country

Meanwhile, Mohsen Rezaei, a senior adviser to Iran's Supreme

PM offers condolences to family of late journalist Altaf Hassan Qureshi



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visited the residence of renowned late journalist Altaf Hassan Qureshi on Saturday to offer condolences to the bereaved family and offer Fateha. During the visit, the prime minister expressed his sympathies to the late journalist's son, Kamran Hassan Qureshi, and daughter, Kurtaba Mazhar. He also prayed for the forgiveness of the deceased and for his elevated status in the hereafter.

Shehbaz Sharif said that Altaf Hassan Qureshi rendered great services to journalism throughout his career. The prime minister described the deceased as an outstanding human being and a distinguished journalist, adding that his contributions to the profession would always be remembered. He said the passing of Altaf Hassan Qureshi had created a void in the field of journalism that would be difficult to fill. The prime minister also prayed for patience and strength for the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss.

Turkiye proposes new regional security alliance

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has proposed a new regional security alliance that could potentially include Israel, provided it recognizes an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. Speaking to Nikkei Asia, Fidan outlined a vision for a Middle East security architecture encompassing countries from Pakistan to the Gulf, including Turkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. This alliance would commit members to mutual protection



of territorial integrity, sovereignty, and security, fostering collective stability. Iran could also join if regional conditions improve. Fidan emphasized that Israel's

inclusion hinges on resolving the Palestinian issue, suggesting that regional nations could help guarantee Israel's security post-resolution. These comments follow reports of US efforts to bring Turkiye and other Muslim-majority nations into the Abraham Accords. While Turkiye and Israel have historical diplomatic ties and significant trade, Ankara suspended trade after the Gaza conflict, stating relations could improve if Israel ceases attacks on Palestinians and ensures aid delivery to Gaza. Fidan reaffirmed Turkiye's

support for a two-state solution and criticized some Israeli politicians for framing Turkiye as a rival, attributing such rhetoric to domestic political maneuvering justifying military policies. He urged the international community to prevent Israel's "expansionist policies," citing deployments in Gaza, the West Bank, Syria, and Lebanon, warning of their threat to regional and international order. Fidan concluded that a just Palestinian resolution and a two-state solution are crucial for lasting Middle East peace and stability.

Pakistan Hajj Mission wins international excellence award for second consecutive year

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Hajj Mission has received international recognition for its outstanding performance during the annual pilgrimage. Director General Hajj Pakistan, Abdul Wahab Soomro, was honoured among the leading heads of Hajj missions from across the world for his role in overseeing services for Pakistani pilgrims. Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah,

Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, presented the prestigious Labaitum Excellence Award to Abdul Wahab Soomro in recognition of the mission's exemplary services to Pakistani pilgrims. Under Soomro's leadership, the Pakistan Hajj Mission secured the excellence award for the second consecutive year, reflecting its continued efforts to improve facilities, management, and support services for pilgrims during Hajj. Senior officials and representatives



of Hajj missions from various countries attended the award ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, the Saudi minister also unveiled the policy frame-

work and operational timeline for Hajj 1448 Hijri. Saudi authorities announced that preparations for the next Hajj season will formally begin on 12 Dhul Hijjah 1447 Hijri, immediately after this year's pilgrimage concludes, allowing participating countries and Hajj missions to start planning and coordination well in advance. The recognition is being viewed as a significant achievement for Pakistan's Hajj administration.

Pakistani Youth Leader Fahad Shahbaz Makes Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2026 List

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal ministers Attaullah Tarar and Shaza Fatima Khawaja, along with Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan and Media Coordinator Badr Shabbaz Warraich, have congratulated Fahad Shahbaz on his inclusion in the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2026 list. They lauded his achievement as a proud moment for Pakistan and its youth, highlighting his contributions to youth empowerment and social impact. Tarar emphasized the encouragement this recognition brings, showcasing Pakistani youth's growing international influence and emerging leadership talent. Khawaja recognized Shahbaz's significant contributions to youth development through the Youth General Assembly and his professional experience. Mashood noted Shahbaz as the sole Pakistani selected in the Social Impact category, expressing confidence in his continued efforts for youth empowerment. Warraich affirmed Shahbaz's future role in mentoring young people and advancing constructive initiatives. Fahad Shahbaz, founder of the Youth General Assembly Pakistan, is the only Pakistani recognized in the Social Impact category and holds both the Diana Award and Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia listing, underscoring his exceptional accomplishments.

# Government and Action Committee poised for agreement, says AJK PM spokesperson

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Spokesperson for the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Shaukat Javed Mir, said that there is a strong possibility of a breakthrough in the negotiations between both governments and the Jammu and Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee, which is expected to lead to a major breakthrough in Azad Kashmir's history.

The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, is making every possible effort to implement an acceptable formula, keeping in view the agreement reached between both parties before June 9.

He expressed these views while talking to the media outside a private hotel.

He said that President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Defence Forces Hafiz Syed Asim Munir, national security institutions, and the Awami Action Committee



deserve appreciation for prioritizing dialogue over deadlock.

As long as Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore is at the helm,

not only will negotiations not fail, but there won't even be a stalemate. However, positive differences of opinion arise where there are people of sound judgment.

The PPP's policies on human rights, ideological struggle, national identity, national dignity, and institutional stability are self-evident. In line with the wisdom of Quaid-e-Awam Shabeed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Daughter of the East Mohatma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairperson for Political Affairs Mohatma Faryal Talpur, and the party's central senior leader Chaudhry Riaz, Acting President Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, former Prime Ministers Chaudhry Abdul Majid, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, Chaudhry Pervaiz Ashraf, and the party are moving toward achieving a landslide victory in the general elections through parliamentary success.

## Pakistan's Nuclear Milestone Celebrated in Azad Kashmir

**Bureau Report**

The 28th anniversary of Pakistan's nuclear capability was celebrated in Wadi Leepa with enthusiasm. Shaukat Javed Mir, Azad Kashmir government's representative, was the chief guest, and Khurshid Mir presided. The event included flag hoisting ceremonies for Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, followed by prayers for national security and the freedom of Jammu and Kashmir. Shaukat Javed Mir highlighted Pakistan's strength in the Islamic world and its role in global peace, attributing its nuclear power status to leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal. He condemned India's actions and praised Pakistan's defense capabilities, mentioning targeted nuclear installations and downed Indian aircraft. Mir also paid tribute to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, and Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan for their contributions. Other speakers, including Bashir Alam Awan and Abdul Aziz Budhan, emphasized that Pakistan and its army are non-negotiable for the Kashmiri people. They vowed to continue resistance against India until freedom is achieved. The ceremony concluded with prayers for martyrs, and refreshments were served, with attendees chanting "Pakistan Zindabad."



## Youm-e-Takbir Marked by Unity and National Resolve in Muzaffarabad

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: A grand ceremony was organized on May 28th under the auspices of the Strong Federation of Pakistan Movement on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbir and Youm-e-Yakjehti. The ceremony was attended by Chairman Strong Federation of Pakistan Movement Sardar Muhammad Usman Hayat Khan Abbasi Advocate, Sajid Qureshi, Israr Arbab Abbasi, Kabir Ahmed Abbasi Noor Khan Abdullah Khan and other political and social figures. On this occasion, a cake was cut on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbir, while special prayers were also offered for the security, development and stability of the country and nation. Addressing the ceremony, Chairman Strong Federation of Pakistan Movement Sardar Muhammad Usman Hayat Khan Abbasi Advocate said that May 28th is an unforgettable day in the history of Pakistan when Pakistan achieved the honor of becoming the first nuclear power in the Islamic world by carrying out nuclear explosions. He said that Youm-e-Takbir is a day of renewing the resolve of national unity, sovereignty and defense of the homeland. Pakistan's armed forces and national leadership have always made sacrifices for the security and stability of the country, which the nation values.



## Ghareeb Awam Party slams Sindh Govt Over Eid "Crisis" in Karachi

**News Desk**

KARACHI: Chairman and Head of the Pakistan Ghareeb Awam Party, Syed Arshad Hussain, has strongly condemned the severe water shortage and unannounced electricity load-shedding in the city ahead of Eid-ul-Adha. He called upon the Chief Minister of Sindh, the Chief Secretary, the Provincial Minister for Local Government, Sindh, and the Mayor of Karachi to take immediate notice of the continued water crisis and unscheduled power outages affecting citizens during the Eid festivities.

Syed Arshad Hussain expressed concern that the Sindh Government has effectively left the people of Karachi at the mercy of incompetent officials and staff of public institutions who appear to have little understanding of, or concern for, the hardships faced by ordinary citizens.

He urged the government to take serious notice of the performance of K-Electric and the Water Corporation and to ensure the uninterrupted provision of essential services to the residents of Karachi, particularly during the Eid-ul-Adha holidays.

## Three Killed in Separate Accidents in Attock

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: Three people lost their lives in separate incidents in Pindigheb town, Attock, on Saturday, according to police and hospital sources.

In the first incident, a motorcyclist was killed in a head-on collision with a car near Kharappa Interchange within the jurisdiction of Pindigheb Police Station. Police said that Shoaib Ahmed was riding his motorcycle when a speeding car, allegedly driven recklessly by an unidentified driver, collided with him. He died on the spot.

In another incident, a 16-year-old boy, Hafiz Muhammad Shahmir, drowned while bathing in Sahwal Dam in Kamrail village.

Separately, a man identified as Waseem Ramzan drowned in a mini dam in Dhoke Laham. Local volunteers later recovered his body and handed it over to his family for burial. Police have registered separate cases and launched investigations into all three incidents.

## Garlic

KHANPUR: A vendor displaying garlic to attract the customers at his roadside shop in the city.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Positive Progress in Muzaffarabad Talks: First Round Concludes Amicably

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The first round of negotiations between the Action Committee and the High Power Committee has been completed in a pleasant atmosphere. According to sources, various important issues were discussed in detail during the negotiations and overall the talks are progressing positively.

Sources say that 37 points have been considered so far, while the important issue related to the seats of the refugees will be discussed in the final phase of the negotiations. The federal representatives listened to the demands of the negotiation committee in detail



and generously, which has further strengthened the atmosphere of trust between the parties.

A break was also taken during the negotiations, however, according to sources, both sides expressed their determination to resolve the issues through understanding. During the break, the representatives of the High Power Committee and the Action Committee avoided talking to the media and focused on making the negotiation process fruitful.

Political and social circles are welcoming the negotiation process and are expressing hope that problems can be resolved only through mutual consultation and serious dialogue.

# The World Is Discovering the Cost of Chokepoints

**Muhammad Arfa Mushtaq**

A missile fired in the Persian Gulf does not stay in the Persian Gulf. It travels, invisibly, through oil markets, shipping lanes, and inflation reports, arriving weeks later in the fuel bills of Japanese commuters, the factory costs of South Korean manufacturers, and the cooking oil prices of Nigerian families. That is the quiet, unsettling truth about the modern global economy: its most vulnerable points are not financial systems or trade agreements. They are stretches of water narrow enough to swim across.

The Strait of Hormuz is one such stretch. At its narrowest, it is only 21 miles wide. Yet roughly one-quarter of the world's seaborne oil passes through

it daily, along with around one-fifth of global liquefied natural gas. More than 20 million barrels move through that corridor every day, bound almost entirely for the energy-hungry economies of Asia. Close Hormuz, or even credibly threaten to, and you have not started a regional conflict. You have triggered a global economic event.

This is precisely why Iran treats it as a weapon. Tehran has few tools that match American military power, but it does not need many. Geography is enough. The threat to mine the strait, to harass tankers with speedboats, or to fire on vessels passing through Iranian territorial waters costs Iran relatively little to issue. The damage it does to global markets is immediate and disproportionate. Oil prices spike on rumor alone. Shipping insurance rates climb. Asian importers start calculating alternative routes that

do not exist. Iran does not need to win a war. It only needs to make the strait feel dangerous.

Washington, for its part, has spent decades positioning itself as the guarantor of free navigation through Hormuz, deploying carrier strike groups and conducting freedom of navigation operations to signal that the waterway belongs to everyone. But that posture is expensive to maintain and politically complicated to justify indefinitely. Every escalation with Tehran forces the same uncomfortable question: what exactly is the United States protecting, and for whom?

The honest answer is mostly Asia. China, Japan, South Korea, and India together account for the bulk of Gulf oil imports. Japan and South Korea import nearly all their oil, much of it from Gulf producers whose only

viable export route runs through Hormuz. China, the world's largest oil importer, has no realistic alternative supply chain that does not pass through contested waters somewhere. The irony is hard to miss: the countries most exposed to a Hormuz closure are not the ones patrolling it.

When tensions rise, the economic pain spreads before a single shot is fired. Shipping costs increase. Companies reroute orders or hold off on new contracts. Energy inflation feeds through to food prices, manufacturing costs, and consumer spending across markets that had nothing to do with the original dispute. A confrontation between Washington and Tehran becomes, almost automatically, a problem for factory owners in Guangzhou and vegetable vendors in Chennai.

Hormuz is not an isolated case.

The Red Sea has been disrupted by Houthi attacks on commercial vessels, forcing shipping companies to reroute around Africa at enormous cost. The Suez Canal, through which a meaningful share of global trade normally flows, sits exposed to regional instability it cannot control. The Taiwan Strait, through which most of the world's advanced semiconductors are produced on one side, is the subject of a tense standoff that markets price into every supply chain decision they make.

What is becoming clear, in ways that policymakers were slow to accept, is that globalization was built on geographic assumptions that may no longer hold. Free trade, just-in-time supply chains, and integrated energy markets all depend on a small number of corridors staying open. Those corridors are controlled

by geography, and geography favors whoever is willing to threaten disruption.

The deepest lesson of the US-Iran conflict is not about nuclear negotiations or regional alliances. It is about infrastructure. The world constructed a system of extraordinary economic interdependence and then ran it through a handful of narrow passages, assuming they would remain available. The Strait of Hormuz is the most vivid reminder of how precarious that assumption always was.

Globalization promised a borderless world. The chokepoints are reminding us that some borders were never drawn on maps.

The writer is student in International Relations at National Defence University, Islamabad. He can be reached at mianarfa184@gmail.com



**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	3:18 am
Zohr	12:05 pm
Asr	5:04 pm
Maghrib	7:12 pm
Isha	8:53 pm

**EMERGENCY**

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 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 directs all stakeholders to remain on high alert during torrential rains across Punjab

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed all relevant departments to remain on high alert during torrential rains in the province, in order to ensure immediate drainage of rainwater, besides continuous monitoring and effective oversight of WASA operations for swift removal of rainwater. She also directed continuous monitoring of disposal and storm water drains. She directed the relevant authorities not

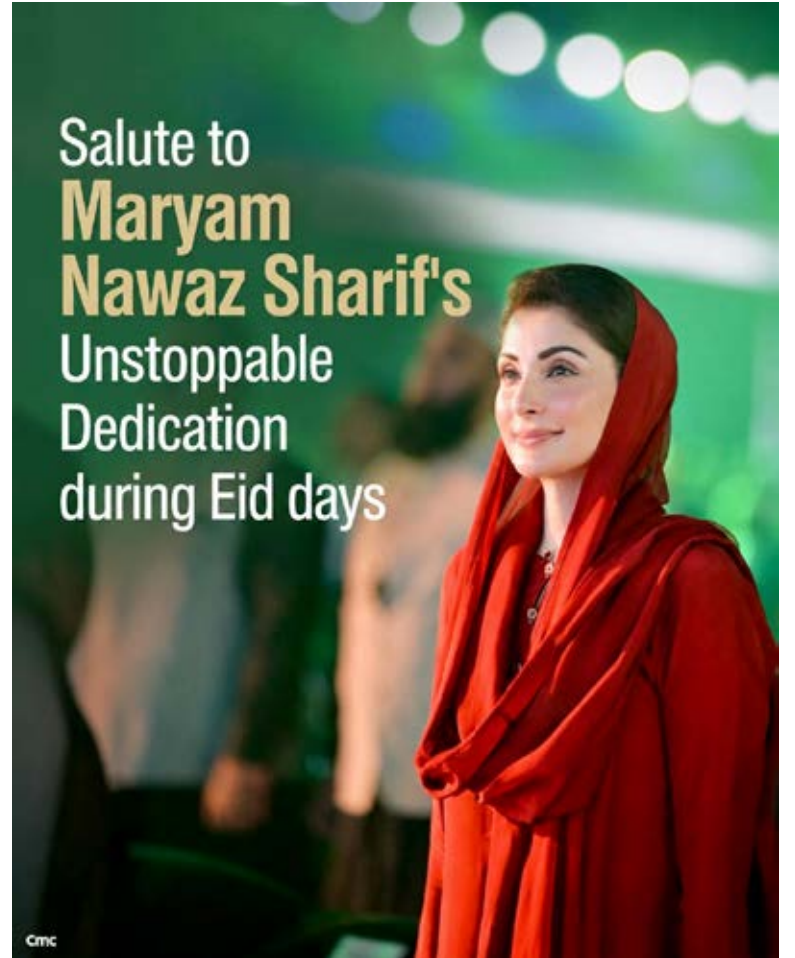
to allow rainwater to accumulate in urban areas; and the Irrigation Department teams to remain fully alert in the field to continuously monitor flow of water in canals.

She directed to ensure that all manholes in urban and rural areas have their covers in place, besides taking all safety measures during rains.

Chief Minister Punjab directed to take all necessary safety arrangements to prevent unpleasant incidents at construction sites during rains; besides

conducting special monitoring of dilapidated and structurally sensitive buildings. She directed district administrations to issue alerts regarding roof collapse risks; besides making special arrangements to keep traffic flowing on major highways and main roads.

She directed teams of Safe City Authority and CTO to remain fully alert in this regard, in order to maintain public guidance and communication for traffic management; and directed all relevant departments and field teams across the



Salute to Maryam Nawaz Sharif's Unstoppable Dedication during Eid days

province to remain fully prepared for the protection of public life and property.

## Restrictions

ISLAMABAD: Police stop the vehicle of non-locals and without family at police check post on road leading towards Daman e Koh in the Federal Capital. Only families and locals are allowed to go forward.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Dadu DC accused of sabotaging 242 education department hires

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Dadu is accused of defying Sindh Cabinet decisions and court orders, halting the hiring of 242 lower staff for the Education Department.

The Sindh Cabinet mandated completion of offer letters for 2023 recruits by June 30, 2026, a directive echoed by Sindh High Court benches.

While other districts proceeded, Dadu's Education Department appointments are stalled post-list release.

Sources allege the DC intended to alter the candidate list, with some candidates citing political interference.

Candidates plan legal action if appointments aren't finalized by the deadline. The DC was unavailable for comment.

## Record animal waste collected during Eid-ul-Adha under Suthra Punjab

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: 'Suthra Punjab' initiative surpassed its 2025 record by collecting over 376,000 tons of animal waste and garbage during Chand Raat and the three days of Eid-ul-Adha.

This year's collection, spread across Chand Raat (55,000

tons), Eid day 1 (126,188 tons), day 2 (113,233 tons), and day 3 (82,163 tons), exceeded last year's 357,000 tons.

Citizens, who received doorstep collection services, expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for the efficient waste management.

To ensure the success of the



operation, Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, and Assistant Commissioners were actively present in the field, supported by continuous monitoring from control

rooms at various administrative levels.

For the first time, Safe City cameras and drones were utilized to effectively identify and manage waste.

## Multan Eyes Provincial Status: Chairman Shaheen Pushes for 28th Amendment

Iram Asim

MULTAN: Rao Abdul Qayyum Shaheen, Chairman of the Multan Provincial Movement, stated that the proposed 28th Constitutional Amendment is crucial for establishing Saraiki provinces, including Multan province. He emphasized Multan's historical significance as a former province,



citing its central role in the region as documented in historical texts. Shaheen urged all major political parties, including PML-N, PPP, PTI, JUI, JI, and JUP, along with regional parties and Saraiki organizations, to collectively pressure the government to expedite the passage of the 28th Amendment. He believes the amendment will eliminate obstacles to provincial creation and expects unanimous support in the Assembly. Shaheen highlighted Multan's current population of 5 to 5.2 million and the presence of political leadership within the city, deeming it regrettable that the city is overlooked. He reiterated the long-standing demand for Multan province, pointing to its diverse linguistic population and its maintained centrality. A representative meeting will soon convene all political parties, Saraiki organization leaders, and stakeholders to formulate a unified action plan for the 28th Amendment, launching it as a movement.

## DC Umar Abbas Mela leads solidarity rally to honor sanitation workers in Toba Tek Singh



Zafar Chishty

TOBA TEK SINGH: Toba Tek Singh Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela led a solidarity rally to honor sanitation workers involved in the successful Eid-ul-Azha cleanliness operation, part of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's "Suthra Punjab" initiative. The rally, attended by district administration, local government, Suthra Punjab Program staff, and sanitation workers, moved from the Deputy Commissioner's Office to the Municipal Committee. During the event, sweets were distributed, and DC Mela commended the sanitation teams for their dedication amidst challenging weather and heavy workloads. He highlighted their professionalism in maintaining exemplary cleanliness standards, calling them "ambassadors of public service" for ensuring a clean environment during the Eid holidays. The Eid operation saw the collection and disposal of 6,768 tons of waste. This included 1,056 tons from pre-Eid campaigns, 2,296 tons on the first day of Eid, 2,016 tons on the second, and 1,400 tons on the third. To manage the waste, 111 special camps were set up in union councils, and 77 dumping sites were operational. The operation also included arrangements for 4 temporary cattle markets and 19 collective slaughter points.

## Al-Shifa launches first Pakistan-specific ophthalmic genetics database

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital has launched Pakistan's first Ophthalmic Genetics Gene-Disease Variation Database, a major step toward improving the diagnosis and treatment of inherited eye diseases through precision medicine and locally relevant research.

The database, developed by the hospital's Department of Ophthalmic Genetics under geneticist Dr Rutaba Gul and senior bioinformatician Abu Bakar, records mutations linked to inherited retinal diseases, congenital cataracts, glaucoma, and corneal dystrophies.

The initiative aims to address a major gap in global genomic



medicine, where most reference data comes from European or East Asian populations and often does not accurately reflect

South Asian genetic patterns. Pakistan carries a comparatively high burden of inherited eye disorders because cousin

marriages increase the risk of recessive genetic diseases.

According to Al-Shifa data, hereditary and congenital conditions account for nearly 40% to 60% of childhood blindness cases in Pakistan. Specialists believe earlier diagnosis through genetic screening can help doctors identify at-risk children before symptoms worsen, improve family counselling, and support future gene-therapy planning.

The hospital's dedicated ophthalmic genetics laboratory, established in January 2025, has already completed free genetic testing for 150 patients across the country, leading to the identification of 45 different eye-related genetic diseases. Officials said each test can cost nearly Rs100,000 in the private



market, making access difficult for many families.

President of Al-Shifa Trust Maj Gen (Retd) Rehmat Khan said the organisation plans to expand the programme into a broader national database and integrate genetic screening

services across its hospital network.

"This database is not just a scientific tool; it is a step toward better outcomes for future generations," Dr Rutaba Gul said.

She said the initiative could

help reduce avoidable disability, lower long-term treatment costs, and improve educational and employment opportunities for children living with inherited vision disorders, while also strengthening Pakistan's role in global genomic research.

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# Pakistan's Nuclear Journey

Pakistan's nuclear journey is not merely a scientific project; rather, it is a story of national survival, sovereignty, defense stability, and national dignity that placed Pakistan among the nuclear powers of the world. Since the creation of Pakistan, the political situation in South Asia, tensions with India, war threats, and defense imbalance made Pakistan realize the necessity of a strong defense system for its security. Particularly, the 1971 war and the separation of East Pakistan deeply convinced Pakistan's leadership that if national security was to be safeguarded permanently, the country had to equip itself with the most advanced defense capabilities. It was in this background that Pakistan's nuclear program was initiated, beginning a long, difficult, and patient journey.

The initial concept of Pakistan's nuclear program emerged during the 1960s, but its pace accelerated after the 1971 war. At that time, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto made the historic declaration: "We will eat grass, but we will build the atomic bomb." This was not merely a political slogan but a symbol of national determination. India was already advancing rapidly in the scientific field, and its first nuclear test in 1974 further increased security concerns for Pakistan. After India's nuclear explosion, Pakistan declared its nuclear program a national priority, and various scientific institutions were organized and activated systematically.

The contributions of Pakistani scientists to the nuclear journey are unforgettable. In particular, the name of

Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan will always be written in golden words in history. Dr. A. Q. Khan utilized the experience and expertise he gained in Europe for Pakistan's defense and successfully advanced the uranium enrichment program. He not only strengthened the scientific foundations of the project but also trained a team of young scientists who worked under extremely difficult circumstances to make Pakistan a nuclear power. Under his leadership, Khan Research Laboratories played a central role in giving practical shape to the nuclear program.

Pakistan's nuclear program is not only a story of scientists' hard work but also one of national determination, sacrifice, and secret struggle. Global powers strongly opposed Pakistan's nuclear ambitions. Various countries imposed economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure was exerted, and obstacles were created in acquiring scientific equipment and technology. Despite all these difficulties, the Pakistani nation and leadership never weakened in their resolve. It was a time when Pakistani scientists worked day and night with limited resources to provide the country with an invincible defense capability.

During the rule of Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, Pakistan's nuclear program was advanced more rapidly and secretly. Despite international pressure, he continued the program and provided full state support to scientists. In the context of the Afghan war, the United

States could not impose excessive pressure on Pakistan, which allowed the nuclear program to progress quietly. Later, Benazir Bhutto also continued supporting the nuclear program during both of her terms in office. Although she faced international diplomatic pressure, she did not allow the program to weaken in matters of national security. During her tenure, progress was also made in missile technology and defense capabilities, which further strengthened Pakistan's defense system.

The most historic moment in Pakistan's nuclear journey came on May 28, 1998, when Pakistan successfully conducted nuclear tests in the Chagai region of Baluchistan. This day is remembered in Pakistan's history as "Youme-e-Takbeer" (The Day of Greatness). India had conducted nuclear tests only days earlier, after which Pakistan faced immense international pressure not to respond with its own tests. However, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was under severe pressure from the public, opposition parties, and the Awami Ittehad led by Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri. Scientists and General Jehangir Karamat also opposed compromise and advised the Prime Minister that the time had come to conduct the tests. On the other hand, the All-Parties Conference had already issued a joint declaration under the leadership of Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri. The next day, renowned journalist Majeed Nizami wrote in his newspaper that if the Prime Minister

did not grant permission, the public itself would "explode the government." Consequently, even unwillingly, approval for the nuclear tests was granted. The explosions in the mountains of Chagai sent a message to the world that Pakistan would never compromise on its freedom, sovereignty, and defense. After these tests, Pakistan became the seventh nuclear power in the world and the first nuclear power in the Muslim world.

The success of Pakistan's nuclear program not only established a balance of defense but also transformed the balance of power in the region. India's presumed dominance in South Asia was challenged, and Pakistan emerged as a strong defense power. Nuclear capability provided Pakistan with an effective deterrent against potential enemy aggression. This is why the threat of full-scale war against Pakistan decreased significantly after it became a nuclear state, creating a new strategic environment in the region.

Another important aspect of Pakistan's nuclear program is that Pakistan has always emphasized the peaceful and responsible use of its nuclear assets. Pakistan repeatedly assured the international community that its nuclear program was purely for defensive purposes and that it adhered to international laws and safety standards. A strong command and control system was established for the protection of Pakistan's nuclear assets, which is considered among the safest systems in the world. As a result, international confidence in Pakistan's nuclear program gradually increased.

*Continued on Page 7*

Analysis



Muhammad Asif

## World No Tobacco Day

It has been almost four hundred years since early writings first drew attention to the health hazards of tobacco. For decades, there has been a strong consensus in the scientific and health community that tobacco products pose serious health and economic risks. Successive governments around the world, working with civil society, have taken a range of measures through regulation and awareness to reduce tobacco use. Yet it continues to pose a serious threat to public health and economic wellbeing across the world, including Pakistan.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that tobacco causes more than 7 million deaths every year worldwide, including about 1.6 million deaths from second-hand smoke exposure.

These figures should compel us to reflect on the scale of a public health challenge that continues to affect millions of people and families.

Children and young people remain particularly vulnerable. The tobacco and nicotine industry continues to target younger generations through evolving products and marketing approaches designed to create and sustain addiction. Early exposure to nicotine heightens the risk of lifelong dependence and adverse health outcomes.

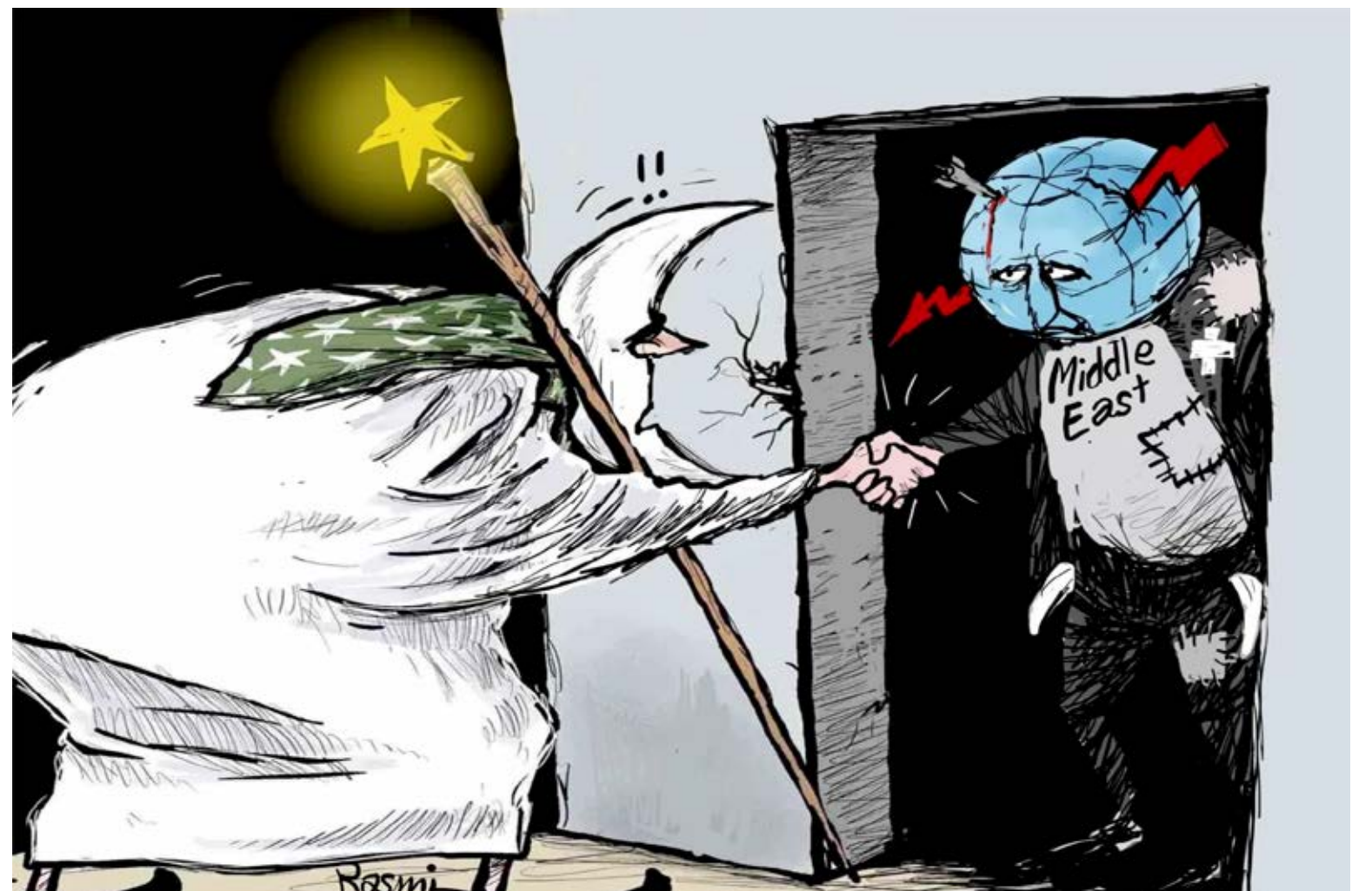
The latest research shows that, globally and in Pakistan, the use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, nicotine pouches and other nicotine products presents growing public health concerns. There is also evidence of concerning patterns of poly-substance use, where tobacco and nicotine products may coexist with other harmful substances, creating serious risks for young people and communities. Stronger awareness, regulation and prevention efforts are essential.

Early exposure to nicotine heightens the risk of lifelong dependence, adverse health outcomes and limited future opportunities. Widespread second-hand smoke exposure increases children's vulnerability to asthma, pneumonia, ear infections, low birth weight and sudden infant death. The impact extends beyond health, placing a heavy burden on families and health systems.

Tobacco products are also closely linked with a growing burden of non-communicable diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancer and chronic respiratory conditions. These illnesses affect individuals and families in deeply personal ways and place sustained pressure on our hospitals, clinics and public health services.

For many households, the impact is not abstract. A working-age parent falling ill, repeated hospital visits, the cost of long-term treatment and reduced earning capacity can quickly strain already limited household resources. These pressures are felt in everyday life, from missed school days for children to the difficulties families face in managing routine expenses.

As your elder and as your head of state, I must tell you that this day is a reminder of our shared responsibility to protect current and future generations from the harms of tobacco products.



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

## Energy Diplomacy in the 21st Century

Uzair Ahmad

Energy has become a central element of 21st-century geopolitics, with its role shifting from a mere market commodity to a potent political tool. This is evident in several concurrent developments: Russia's failed attempt to weaponize gas against Europe, China's extensive energy infrastructure diplomacy, and OPEC+'s resurgent cartel power. Russia's decision to cut gas supplies to Europe in response to the 2022 Ukraine invasion backfired significantly.

The decades-long interdependence, where Europe relied on Russian gas and Russia on European revenue, was designed to constrain both. However, Russia's coercive tactic of weaponizing energy dependency was met with a radical reorientation of European energy policy. Pipeline gas exports from Russia to the EU plummeted by over 82% between 2021 and 2024, as countries like Poland switched to alternative sources like Norwegian gas. Ukraine, already independent since 2015, further integrated its energy with Europe.

Russia's miscalculation stemmed from underestimating Europe's political will to find alternative solutions once the cost of appeasement became politically unacceptable. Deprived of its primary market, Russia was forced to sell gas to China at significantly lower prices, initiating a geopolitical rebalancing. In contrast to Russia's coercive approach, China employs infrastructure diplomacy.

Since launching the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, Beijing has invested heavily in energy infrastructure—pipelines, refineries, power plants, and LNG terminals—in over 150 countries. BRI overseas energy investments reached approximately

USD 93.9 billion in 2025 alone, with oil and gas activities accounting for over 74% of China's foreign energy expenditure. The Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the UAE, has become a key partner region. These are not merely business deals but strategic relationships. Nations reliant on Chinese-funded energy infrastructure develop structural reasons to maintain cooperative ties with Beijing, thereby expanding China's diplomatic influence into areas traditionally dominated by Western institutions. While criticized as debt-trap diplomacy, the reality is more complex, but China's leverage through energy investment is undeniable and rapidly growing. OPEC+ and its extended OPEC+ alliance, born from the 1973 oil embargo, demonstrate the political nature of world energy markets. As a cartel, resource-rich developing nations can wield collective power over a strategically vital commodity.

Saudi Arabia, possessing a substantial portion of known petroleum reserves, acts as a key swing producer. The 2022 decision by OPEC+ to reduce production, despite American opposition and during a period of high global inflation, marked a significant shift. Saudi Arabia's willingness to prioritize cartel interests over American alignment signaled a new strategic confidence in a multipolar world. Ironically, the U.S. shale revolution, which made America the largest oil producer, diminished Washington's leverage over Gulf producers. This created an opening for OPEC+ to re-establish producer-state coordination as a core element of global energy governance.

These three cases illustrate that energy interdependence is a political relationship, not merely an economic one, subject to active negotiation and manipulation. Russia learned that coercive leverage requires the dependent party to have no exit, while political will can accelerate the development of exit options. China demonstrated that infra-

structure investment builds enduring influence but also creates exposure to recipient states' political dynamics. OPEC+ proved cartel coordination remains potent but now faces challenges from the ongoing energy transition. The clean energy transition is a pervasive dynamic affecting all these scenarios. Despite fossil fuels still providing over 80% of global energy, with peak oil demand yet to be reached, nations responsible for over 88% of greenhouse gas emissions have pledged net-zero goals. The rapid growth of renewable energy and the race for critical materials like lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements are creating new dimensions of resource geopolitics. Regions that were marginal in the oil age may become central in the battery age. 21st-century energy diplomacy operates in the complex space between markets and power politics. The current moment signifies not just an extension of fossil fuel geopolitics but the dawn of a new energy order with uncertain outlines and high stakes. States that navigate this transition skillfully—diversifying energy relations, investing in future technologies, managing present politics, and establishing legitimate multilateral governance structures—will be best positioned internationally. Conversely, those who mistake energy dependency for permanent leverage or infrastructure investment for guaranteed loyalty will face instability. Russia, China, and OPEC+ have already provided lessons in this emerging instability, and the world is still processing these developments.

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## Qurbani Project Brings Hope and Relief to Thousands in KP

The spirit of sacrifice, compassion, and humanity was beautifully witnessed during this year's Qurbani Project carried out across Swabi and various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the support of Help in Need Pakistan and IHHNL. Through this remarkable humanitarian initiative, thousands of sacrificial animals were distributed and slaughtered, while thousands of deserving families benefited from fresh meat during Eid-ul-Adha, bringing smiles and relief to countless households.

The role of Help in Need Pakistan deserves immense appreciation for successfully organizing and managing this large-scale humanitarian activity. Under the visionary leadership of Chairman Inam Masoodi and CEO Mr. Hamid Bangash, the organization demonstrated excellent planning, commitment, transparency, and dedication in serving humanity. Mr. Hamid Bangash and his hardworking team remained actively engaged in ensuring the smooth implementation of the project, despite logistical and operational challenges. Their untiring efforts reflected a true spirit of social responsibility and welfare.

Special appreciation is also extended to the international guests and partners from IHHNL, particularly Mr. Veli Belgei and Mr. Khurshed Ahmad, whose generous support made this initiative possible. By arranging thousands of sacrificial animals for the people of Pakistan, they conveyed a powerful message of brotherhood, compassion, and global solidarity. Their humanitarian commitment deserves recognition and gratitude from the people of Pakistan.

The cooperation and support of district administrations also played a highly significant role in the success of the project. Deputy Commissioner Swabi, Dr. Tariq Ullah, and

Deputy Commissioner Malakand, Mr. Fayaz Ahmad Sherpao, provided excellent coordination, facilitation, and administrative support, ensuring proper management and smooth execution of activities. Their leadership and commitment toward public welfare are highly commendable.

The contribution of volunteers (Razakars) was equally inspiring. Under the supervision and guidance of Abdul Salam Advocate, Mufti Fazal Razik, and Hamayun Khan, many volunteers actively participated in distribution, management, and service delivery with sincerity and dedication. Their selfless efforts reflected the true teachings of sacrifice, service, and humanity. May Allah Almighty bless all of them with the best rewards for their noble services.

Furthermore, the support of TMA officials, district administration, local community members, and volunteers proved instrumental in the successful completion of this welfare project. Their cooperation strengthened community spirit and ensured that help reached deserving people in an organized and respectful manner.

At a time when many families face economic difficulties, such humanitarian efforts not only provide immediate relief but also restore hope and strengthen social unity. The Qurbani Project stands as an inspiring example of how organizations, administrations, volunteers, and communities can work together for the welfare of humanity. It is hoped that such noble initiatives will continue in the future to support deserving families across Pakistan.

May Allah bless all those who contributed to this noble cause and accept their sacrifices and efforts in service of humanity.

*The writer is Mphil Scholar and he can be reached at sohail.baber@conceptschoools.edu.pk*

Analysis



Sohail Ahmad Baber

# Yousaf Raza Gilani highlights Youm-e-Takbeer's significance for national pride and security

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani congratulated the nation on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbeer, stating that May 28 is a glorious and unforgettable day in Pakistan's history, when the country, through its successful nuclear tests, demonstrated to the world that Pakistan is a sovereign, strong, and invincible nuclear power.

He said that Youm-e-Takbeer is not merely a historic day but a shining symbol of national pride, unity, sacrifice, and unwavering determination. It reminds the nation that when leadership and the people stand united behind a common purpose, no force can hinder Pakistan's progress.

The Chairman Senate paid rich tribute to the political and military leadership, scientists, engineers, and institutions that contributed to the success of Pakistan's nuclear program. He particularly paid homage to former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, noting that his visionary leadership laid the foundation of Pakistan's nuclear program and transformed the dream of a strong and secure Pakistan into a national mission.

He also paid tribute to Shaheed Mohartma Benazir Bhutto, stating that she remained steadfast in advancing



and safeguarding Pakistan's strategic capabilities during a critical phase of the country's history. Despite international pressures and regional challenges, she played a pivotal role in ensuring the continuity and strength-

ening of Pakistan's nuclear and missile programs. Chairman Senate said that her vision, courage, and commitment to national interests significantly contributed to Pakistan's strategic advancement and security.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani further stated that the successful nuclear tests conducted in the regime of former Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on May 28, 1998, marked the culmination of decades of national



effort and determination. He noted that the historic decision to proceed with the nuclear tests, despite immense international pressure, demonstrated Pakistan's resolve to safeguard its sovereignty and national security. The tests established a strategic balance in South Asia and sent a clear message that Pakistan's defense and independence were non-negotiable.

The Chairman Senate said that in the current circumstances, Pakistan requires the same spirit of national unity, solidarity, and determination to overcome economic and regional challenges as was demonstrated by the

nation on Youm-e-Takbeer. He emphasized that all political forces must move forward together on matters relating to national security, defense, and stability.

He urged the younger generation to utilize their abilities in education, research, science, and technology, and to play their role in making Pakistan a stronger, more developed, and more respected nation.

In conclusion, the Chairman Senate prayed that Almighty Allah may keep Pakistan safe and prosperous forever, protect it from all internal and external threats, and make it a symbol of peace, progress, and stability in the world.

## Pakistani Students achieve top rank in Prestigious Erasmus Mundus Program

Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: Pakistan has once again claimed the top spot in the world for fully-funded Erasmus Mundus scholarships, marking the fifth consecutive year the country has secured the top spot in the European Union's Erasmus+ program.

The European Union congratulated 98 Pakistani students selected for the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters scholarships for the 2026 cycle, describing the achievement as another major milestone in Pakistan's growing academic engagement with Europe.

Both the Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels and the EU Delegation in Pakistan took to

social media to celebrate the announcement, reflecting the warmth and depth of a partnership that stretches far beyond diplomacy.

Pakistan leads with 98 winners, ahead of Bangladesh with 80, India with 75, the United States with 68, and Italy with 67; out of a total of 1,872 scholarships awarded to students from 135 countries worldwide.

The figures underscore just how fiercely competitive this program has become, and how consistently Pakistani students are rising to meet that challenge.

The Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels called the achievement a testament to the excellence of Pakistan's youth and the growing



strength of the Pakistan-EU knowledge partnership, reaf-

firming its commitment to advancing science diplomacy and

deepening bilateral ties in higher education, research, innovation,



and emerging technologies.

The Embassy also acknowledged the contributions of former First Secretary Muhammad Adeel, whose work during his Brussels tenure helped strengthen Pakistan-EU cooperation across science, technology, and academic exchange.

The Erasmus Mundus scholarships are among the most competitive academic awards globally, attracting tens of thousands of applications every year for fewer than 2,000 fully

funded seats.

The program enables selected students to pursue joint master's degrees across multiple European universities under a single academic framework.

The package covers full tuition fees, monthly stipends, travel allowances, installation support, and medical insurance, with mobility opportunities across countries including France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Portugal, and Finland.

## Secretary Bhutta demands top-tier healthcare and unwavering security at sacred sites

Bureau Report

LAHORE: "The provision of state-of-the-art healthcare facilities and the seamless, dignified facilitation of devotees at our sacred heritage sites represent a non-negotiable benchmark of compassionate public governance," asserted Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, during an extensive, multi-sector operation-

al review of the Data Darbar Hospital and later the revered shrine complex of Hazrat Ali Hajveri (RA), universally acclaimed as Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA).

Driving a comprehensive initiative to optimize institutional service delivery, the Secretary, alongside Medical Superintendent Dr. Rashad Iqbal, Administrator Data Darbar Muhammad Ali Khan, and senior clinicians, systematically audited

staff attendance, monitored sanitary environments, and scrutinized clinical capabilities within the newly established medical ward and specialized children's ward, two modernized, high-capacity wings meticulously designed to catalyze a paradigm shift in delivering premium, medical care to the underprivileged.

Following his rigorous evaluation of the hospital infrastructure,

Dr. Ehsan Bhutta proceeded to the holy shrine to lay a traditional floral wreath and offer Fateha, where he engaged directly with pilgrims and security personnel, evaluated digital surveillance grids, and mandated unyielding compliance regarding foolproof security, continuous hourly janitorial protocols, and the impeccable, timely distribution of meals at the Langar Khana hall ahead of the heavy influx of devotees for the



every Juma Mubarak congregation, warning that any systemic inertia, administrative laxity, or lack of cour-

tesy would be summarily met with immediate and stringent institutional accountability.

## Climate Change Threatens Ziarat's Ancient Juniper Forests—A Unique Ecosystem

Rafiullah Mandokhel

QUETTA: Sitting on a makeshift hotel bench in Ziarat Bazaar, a community elder, Abdul Khaliq Sarangzai speaks with a heavy heart, "The juniper trees that once stood strong are now struggling to survive, groundwater level is depleting, birds are disappearing from the skies, the snowfall is fading and the air is getting warmer."

He is one of the indigenous community members, concerned about the rapidly changing landscape in Ziarat, known for its unique and ancient juniper forests.

Environmentalists say the profound impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly evident across Balochistan, where rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged droughts, and extreme weather events are reshaping fragile ecosystems. From the snow-fed valleys of the north to the arid plains and coastal belt, communities are experiencing growing water scarcity and environmental stress. The juniper forests in Ziarat, along with pine forests in the Sulaiman Range and mangrove ecosystems along

the coast, are among the most vulnerable, as slower regeneration, pest outbreaks, and human pressure combine with shifting climate patterns to weaken these ancient natural systems.

Ziarat Valley is situated some 130 kilometers from Quetta and is known for its ancient juniper forests. The juniper is locally known as Obashta and is also seen as a symbol of resilience and endurance.

A veteran environmental activist and forest expert, Muhammad Hashim, has been working on climate education in Ziarat Valley for the last couple of years. Hashim worries about the degradation of the juniper forest, which has been severely impacted by natural calamities and local activities.

In order to conserve the ancient juniper forest, the area was designated a national park in 2017. However, stakeholders say its management plan is still under implementation.

The juniper forest in Ziarat is believed to be one of the oldest forests on the planet and spans 112,185 hectares of land. It was declared a 'Man and Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organi-



zation (UNESCO) under their International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme in 2013.

According to locals, the Ziarat juniper forest is located in a dry temperate zone at an altitude of approximately 7,000 feet above sea level in the northeast region of Balochistan. The forest is adjacent to the second-highest mountain of Balochistan, 'Khalifat'. It is home to a variety of flora, such as olives, wild ash, pomegranates, figs, wild pistachio, wild almond, and local medicinal plants (shinshobi, maakhei, and zralga).

"The juniper forest in Ziarat, the pine forest in the Sulaiman

Range, and the mangrove forests in the coastal belt play a pivotal role in carbon sequestration. The forest and its associated plants and wildlife constitute a unique ecosystem," Hashim explains.

The juniper forest is called a 'living fossil' because of its outsized life cycle. It is an important carbon sink, storing a significant amount of carbon in all its pools. Environmentalists estimate that juniper trees are important oxygen producers and carbon sinks, though exact per-tree estimates vary.

The juniper tree is considered to be very tolerant to harsh conditions, as it is a drought-resi-

stant tree that reduces aridity by transpiration, prevents soil erosion, increases soil fertility, and provides grazing pasture. It also improves the groundwater table. However, climate change poses a serious threat to the region.

Climate change has also impacted how much snow Ziarat receives. According to Hashim, Ziarat would receive between eight and ten feet of snowfall in the winter season in the past, but it has been reduced to merely eight inches of snow now. As a result, the juniper trees now get less water, affecting their health.

There are many chal-



lenges to juniper regeneration, including its slow rate of growth, but climate change is the major contributing factor. For example, the parasitic disease Dwarf Mistletoe recently infected the juniper trees on a large scale. Dieback and fungal diseases have also had adverse effects on the health and productivity of juniper trees.

Deputy Conservator Forest Ziarat Haseeb Kakar says, "During past winters, when there would be heavy snowfall, the juniper seed would remain under the snow for three to four months. The hard coat would soften under the snow. In the spring season, the seed would sprout. Now, since the snowfall has decreased, the natural dormancy cycle of the seeds is also disrupted."

The parasites have also resulted in the migration of a wild bird, locally known as Obasht Khwara, which consumes the juniper berry and plays an important role in the regeneration of juniper trees.

Haseeb adds that temperature fluctuations affect the

juniper forest. People are now facing an uncertain situation, suffering either from drought or from super floods. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and disruptions to ecosystems have far-reaching consequences for people, animals, and the environment.

Juniper forests like those in Ziarat take thousands of years to develop. Plans to sustain them cannot wait until the trees are gone.

"The core objective of establishing the Ziarat National Park is to conserve forests and wildlife, and it needs to be implemented on a war footing," appeals Arman, a resident of the Zranda area in Ziarat.

"The juniper forest is our valuable natural heritage. It plays a vital role in reducing environmental pollution and mitigating the impacts of global warming, and it must be conserved," He demands.

The writer is an environmental journalist based in Balochistan. He can be reached at mandokhail.rafi@gmail.com

**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

# CM Bugti welcomes landing of South Air's first successful test flight at New Gwadar International Airport

**Bureau Report**

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has welcomed the landing of South Air's first successful test flight at the New Gwadar International Airport, calling it a vital milestone towards the development of Balochistan, better regional connectivity and promotion of economic activities.

In a message on social networking site X, the Balochistan Chief Minister said that with the commencement of air operations by South Air, Gwadar would have effective and modern air connectivity with various important cities of the country, which will provide safe, fast and quality travel facilities to the public. He said that under the proposed air network, Gwadar would be connected to Turbat, Panjgur, Quetta, Sukkur, Lahore, Islamabad and various cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which would further strengthen transportation and business links



in the province. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that Gwadar has become an important hub for Pakistan's

economic development, maritime trade and regional connectivity saying that the launch of new air services would not only increase

tourism, trade and investment opportunities but could also give a new dimension to economic activities at the local level.

He said that improved air connectivity would play a significant role in creating new employment opportunities and strengthening the local economy.

The Chief Minister of Balochistan, while terming this development as the fruit of joint efforts of the federal and provincial governments, said that the development of Gwadar is among the top priorities of the government.

He reiterated the commitment that all available resources will be utilized to develop Gwadar as an international standard economic and trade hub.

He said that the successful test flight of South Air at the New Gwadar International Airport is a positive and encouraging development towards a bright future, better travel facilities and economic prosperity of Balochistan.

## Dry meat

RAWALPINDI: A nomad family member hangs meat pieces for dry purpose near Marir Hassan area in the city. Nomads hang meat to dry as an ancient and highly efficient method of long-term preservation without refrigeration.



Photo: Online

## Why safety dictates the future of Pakistan's mobility economy

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Digital mobility apps initially gained trust by offering accountability over traditional transit. GPS tracking and digital records provided a sense of security, especially for vulnerable groups like women.

This trust is now evolving; users see technology as an active guardian, with safety becoming paramount for user loyalty and platform sustainability, shifting from a backend feature to a core consumer expectation.

A single security failure can drastically harm a platform's reputation, driving users to competitors. Consequently, companies are increasingly sophisticated in their security measures, making advanced features standard.

In Pakistan, inDrive



exemplifies this shift by integrating features like real-time biometrics and facial recognition for driver verification, alongside route sharing, anonymous communication, in-app support, and an SOS button. Strict consequence management, including account freezes and bans, reinforces accountability. This demand for safety extends to drivers and couriers facing urban risks. Features like destination transparency and the ability to decline rides empower service providers, fostering a balanced and resilient marketplace. Future successful mobility platforms in Pakistan will prioritize passenger and driver security over mere speed.

## Solar prices may rise in Pakistan as govt mulls 18pc GST in budget 2026-27

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Solar panel prices in Pakistan are expected to rise significantly in the upcoming federal budget 2025-26 as the government considers increasing taxes on renewable energy equipment under broader fiscal reforms linked to its programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

According to sources, the IMF has raised concerns over various tax exemptions and concessions available in the country, urging the government to end relief measures.

The exemptions under review reportedly include those granted to electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles and solar panels.

According to sources, a proposal is being considered to increase the sales tax on solar panels from 10% to 18% in the next fiscal year's budget.

If approved, the move is expected to increase the overall cost of installing solar energy systems for households and businesses.



The sources said Pakistan is currently engaged in discussions with the IMF on economic reforms and revenue-enhancing measures as part of a longer-term financial support programme.

Expanding the tax net and reducing sector-specific exemptions are among the

options being examined to boost government revenues.

Energy experts said any increase in taxes on solar equipment could discourage investment in renewable energy projects and make solar systems less affordable for ordinary consumers.

## Pakistan to receive over \$4 billion from IMF during next two years

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Important details have emerged of how much money the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will give to Pakistan during the next two financial years (FYs).

Sources told the 24News TV channel that there was a plan to lend to Pakistan over \$4 billion during the next two years.

It had been estimated, sources informed, that Pakistan would receive \$2.62 billion from the IMF in the next FY, 2026-27, while the country would receive \$1.47 billion from the Fund in the FY, 2027-28.



Sources told the 24News TV channel that both these tranches would be released under the IMF's ongoing loan programmes:

\$2.9 billion under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) Programme in the next FY, while \$530 billion under the Climate Financing Programme also in the next FY.

Sources elaborated that the money-lending organization was expected to lend to Pakistan \$1.5 billion under the EFF programme in the fiscal year, 2027-28, and \$42 billion under the Climate Financing Programme in the same fiscal year.

Currently, Pakistan is engaged in two programmes with the Fund; over \$7 billion EFF programme, and \$1.40 billion Climate Financing Programme.

## Pakistan Railways Union Demands 100% Salary Hike, Threatens Nationwide Protests



**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: Pakistan Railways Prem Union leaders, including Muhammad Ziauddin Ansari and Sheikh Muhammad Anwar, have threatened nationwide protests if employee salaries and pensions aren't increased by 100% to match inflation in the upcoming budget.

They deem a 10% raise unacceptable and demand the government make sacrifices instead. Protests are planned for Multan (June 1) and Rawalpindi (June 2). The union also

called for: \* Normalizing salary payments. \* Exempting Scales 1-16 employees and pensioners from income tax. \* Immediate payment of TA and DA, unused since 2019. \* Recruiting children of railway employees, especially for welding positions, in line with Supreme Court directives. \* Funding for track repair and merging ad hoc allowances into basic salaries. \* Abolishing passenger train privatization and ensuring government responsibility for railway employee salaries.

## No buyer for ready sunflower crop in Nowshera Jadeed

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Farmers of the sunflower crop were waiting for buyers after the crop was ready for sale in Nowshera Jadeed area of Bahawalpur District.

The farmers said that the rate of the sunflower crop was fixed at Rs6,000 per maund, but its cost is too high.

The farmers further complained that the prices of fertilizer and rising infla-

tion have already broken their back.

Nowshera Jadeed farmers urged the government to take measures for the early sale of their sunflower crop.

They further said the federal and Punjab governments should fix the rate of sunflower at Rs10,000 per 40kg. They said that they do not agree with the formula to sell the sunflower crop at a lower rate.

## Railway operations in Balochistan resume after three-day suspension

Pakistan Railways has resumed train services to and from Balochistan today under the existing timetable, ending a three-day suspension period, railway officials confirmed on Saturday.

The Jaffar Express departed from Quetta to Peshawar at its designated time, according to railway officials, who confirmed the latest operational update.

The return service from Peshawar to Quetta will also operate on Saturday morning, restoring connectivity after the temporary disruption.

Earlier, train services to and from Quetta and across parts of Balochistan remained suspended for another day on Friday due to what officials described as "unavoidable circumstances".

They said the Jaffar Express from Quetta would not depart on Friday, while the return service from Peshawar was sent back from Jacobabad; whereas, the operations of Bolan Mail and Chaman passenger trains were also halted.

Meanwhile, several trains departing from Karachi had also experienced delays, including the Tezgam, which left at 1:30am instead of its scheduled 5:30pm departure, triggering passenger protests at Cantt Station.

The Sukkur Express, scheduled for 11:30pm, had also not departed by Friday morning, according to railway police.

It may be noted that at least 14 people, including three Frontier Corps (FC) personnel, were martyred and several others injured in a blast which occurred near the railway track close to Chaman Phatak in Quetta on May 24, the Balochistan government spokesperson said. Several women and children had also sustained injuries in the explosion and were shifted to hospitals for medical treatment.

Following the blast, Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir stressed that the terrorist attacks could not weaken the Pakistani nation's resolve, and vowed to crush terrorism with full force.

A statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that CDF Munir visited Zhob District, Balochistan, to celebrate Eid ul Adha with frontline troops deployed along the Western frontiers on Wednesday.

## PK Pakistan VS Australia Three One Day International Cricket Match Series

# Pakistan's excellent performance, defeated Australia by 5 wickets in First One Day International Match in Rawalpindi

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: This was Pakistan's 1,000th One Day International match and it was made memorable by debutant Arafat Minhas and it was also made a little better for Pakistan by the Australian cricket team as their team was bowled out for just 200 runs. Pakistan completed the target for 5 wickets and won by 5 wickets to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

At the Pindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi, Pakistan captain Shaheen Shah Afridi won the toss and decided to bowl first. The Australian team, which had one debutant, did not have a big batting line-up. Still, there were batsmen like Marnus Labuschagne and Alex Carey who did not work and the entire team was dismissed for 200 runs in 44.1 overs. Opener Matthew Short stood out from the top by scoring 55 runs. Matt Ranshaw later made a good contribution by scoring 61 runs. Names like Marnus Labuschagne and Cameron Green returned to the pavilion on a duck, while captain Josh English made 13. All three were targeted by Arafat Minhas.

Arafat Minhas, who made his debut for Pakistan, took five wickets for 52 runs. He became the first Pakistani bowler to take



five wickets on debut. That too after 1000 ODI matches. Before that, Zakir Khan's record was 4 wickets for 19 runs. Abrar



Ahmed also dismissed two players. In reply, Pakistan started well, but first Moaz Sadaqat was dismissed for 8 and Sahibzada Farhan was dismissed for



28. After losing 2 wickets at 48, Babar Azam and Ghazi Ghauri took over. Both completed their century partnership for the third wicket in the 35th over. During this



time, Babar Azam and Ghazi Ghauri completed half-centuries. Babar Azam was dismissed

when Pakistan's score was 176, and he made a brilliant partnership of 127 runs for the third wicket with Ghauri. Babar Azam was dismissed after playing an innings of 69 runs off 94 balls. When Pakistan was close to victory, Ghazi Ghauri was

dismissed after scoring 65 runs. He played 92 balls. Salman Ali Agha was dismissed after scoring 6 runs. Pakistan chased down the target in 42.3 overs for 5 wickets and won the match by 5 wickets. Nathan Ellis took 2 wickets.

## PHF announces National U21 training camp

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Hockey Federation has announced the commencement of the National Under-21 Hockey Training Camp in Islamabad, aiming to promote hockey across the country and groom future heroes.

According to details released by the federation, this vital training camp is scheduled to begin on June 5, here at the Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad, featuring young players selected from across the nation through the 2026 Open Trials, said a press release.

This camp is part of the Pakistan Hockey Federation's broad and comprehensive strategy to strengthen the national hockey talent pipeline and nurture a new generation capable of proudly representing Pakistan on the international stage. The PHF Selection Committee has released the finalized list

of probables following the conclusion of the open trials.

According to the PHF Spokesperson, Zeeshan (Punjab-4), Ehsan Mohammad (Lahore), Haji M. Usman (Lahore), Farhan Mushtaq (AJK), and Faizan Ali (Gilgit-Baltistan) have been selected for the goalkeeping department.

Similarly, talented players from across the country have been chosen as defenders, midfielders, and strikers, including Mujahid (KPK-1), Ameer Mavvia (Punjab-4), Wasif Naeem (Punjab-4), Abdul Jabbar (Punjab-4), Ali Akbar (Punjab-4), Mohammad Usman (Punjab-4), Abdullah Farooq (Punjab-4), Hamid Ali (Punjab-4), Ahmed Noor (Punjab-4), Khaqan Mehmood (Punjab-1), Umair (Punjab-1), Saif (AJK), Hammad (AJK), Mohammad Zain (Punjab-2), Ameer Hamza (Punjab-2), Rana Ali Sattar (Punjab-2), and Hammad Hussain (Punjab-2).

The players selected from the Lahore Region include Talha Arshad, Hammad Ali (LO), M. Arslan (RI), M. Ahmad (CF), Adil Faqeer (LO), Umair Nagina (RH), Shamoon Sajid (CH), Taimoor Javed (LI), Samiullah Shakeel (RH), M. Faizan (LH), M. Yaseen (LI), Mohammad Kaleem (CF), Ali Raza (RH), Ghulam Mustafa (LI), Taha Sheewani (RI), Hassn Shehbaz (CF), Hussain Haider (LI), Ali Mehdi (CH), Saifullah (RO), Umair Arshad (RI), Ali Anas (RF), Farhan (LF), Huzaifa Farooq, Mr. Shehryar (RH - DHA), and Mr. Hassan Ali (LO).

Furthermore, Nabi Ahmad (LO) from other departments/regions, Meesum (LI), Mubashir (CH), and Azain Aneel (LO) from Sindh, Sikandar Zakir from Wah Cantt, M. Hasan Tahir (RI) from Punjab, Asadullah from Army, and Mohammad Ehtesham from Burewala have also been included in the camp. Yaseen Jamshed, Shahmeer, Mudassar,

Abdul Hameed, and Shahyan RH Khan from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will also showcase their skills.

According to the PHF declaration, restoring Pakistan's lost glory in international hockey remains the top priority. On this significant occasion, the Pakistan Hockey Federation expressed its commitment, stating that the federation is fully dedicated to providing young players with high-quality coaching, an excellent competitive environment, and a clear, transparent pathway to the national team. This Under-21 camp will allow selectors and coaches to closely evaluate the emerging talent from across the country, helping to assemble the strongest national squads for future international tournaments. They added that consistent investment in youth and at the grassroots level is the only sustainable way to reclaim Pakistan's rightful position in world hockey.

## World No Tobacco Day 2026

# Strengthening Tobacco Control-A Public Health Imperative for Pakistan

Every year on 31 May, the world observes World No Tobacco Day to highlight the devastating consequences of tobacco use and to strengthen global efforts to reduce tobacco related disease and death. This year's theme, "Unmasking the Appeal - Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction," shines a spotlight on the tactics employed by the tobacco industry to attract new users, particularly children and youth, through flavored products, deceptive marketing, attractive packaging, and the promotion of emerging nicotine products.

The urgency of this year's message cannot be overstated. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), tobacco kills more than 8 million people annually, including approximately 1.3 million non-smokers who die from exposure to second hand smoke. This translates into nearly 22,000 preventable deaths every day. Tobacco remains one of the leading causes of cancer, heart disease, stroke, chronic respiratory illnesses, and other non-communicable diseases that place immense pressure on health systems and economies worldwide.

Pakistan is not immune to this crisis. Tobacco use claims more than 192,000 Pakistani lives every year over 526 deaths every day. Beyond these tragic figures lies an equally alarming reality: nearly 1,200 children between the ages of 6 and 15 start smoking every day as a replacement smoker. For many of these children, early nicotine exposure leads to lifelong addiction, poor health outcomes, reduced educational attainment, and diminished economic opportunities. Meanwhile, millions of children continue to suffer from second-hand smoke exposure, increasing their risk of asthma, pneu-

monia, ear infections, low birth weight, and sudden infant death.

The burden of tobacco extends far beyond public health. Pakistan incurs an estimated economic cost of nearly Rs. 1,835 billion (1.6% of GDP) annually due to tobacco related illnesses, health-care expenditures, lost productivity, and premature mortality. These costs far exceed the revenue generated from tobacco taxes and represent a significant drain on national development. Every rupee spent treating preventable tobacco related diseases is a rupee diverted from education, infrastructure, social protection, and economic growth.

Recognizing the scale of the challenge, Pakistan became one of the early signatories to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the world's first international public health treaty. The FCTC provides a proven roadmap for reducing tobacco consumption through evidence based measures, including higher tobacco taxes, smoke-free environments, comprehensive advertising bans, strong health warnings, cessation support, and protection from tobacco industry interference.

Since ratifying the FCTC, Pakistan has made notable progress through implementation of the WHO MPOWER package. Smoke-free laws have been introduced in public places and public transport, tobacco advertising restrictions have been strengthened, sales to minors have been prohibited, and pictorial health warnings covering 60 percent of cigarette packs have been implemented. Recent increases in tobacco taxation have also contributed to higher

revenues and reduced consumption. These achievements demonstrate that effective tobacco control policies can save lives while generating resources for national development.

However, progress should not be mistaken for completion. Pakistan continues to lag behind international best practices in several critical areas. Graphic health warnings remain below the WHO recommended standard of at least 85 percent of tobacco packaging. Cigarettes remain relatively affordable for many consumers, particularly children and youth, due to insufficient taxation and the availability of low cost tobacco products. Sustainable domestic financing for tobacco control programs remains limited, constraining public awareness campaigns, cessation services, research, and enforcement efforts.

Equally concerning is the incomplete enforcement of comprehensive bans on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship (TAPS). Tobacco industry continue to exploit digital platforms, social media, point of sale displays, and indirect promotional strategies to reach young audiences. As marketing techniques evolve, regulatory responses must evolve as well.

The rapid emergence of new nicotine products presents another significant challenge. E-cigarettes, heated tobacco products, nicotine pouches, and other novel nicotine delivery systems are increasingly being promoted as modern alternatives, often through youth oriented marketing. Yet these products contain addictive nicotine and can serve as gateways to long term dependence.

Pakistan urgently requires a comprehensive regulatory framework that addresses the sale, marketing, taxation, packaging, and public use of all emerging nicotine and tobacco products.

World No Tobacco Day is more than a symbolic observance; it is a call to action. The Government of Pakistan must strengthen tobacco taxation to reduce affordability, increase the size of graphic health warnings, fully enforce bans on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS), regulate emerging nicotine and tobacco products, expand tobacco cessation services, and establish sustainable funding mechanisms for tobacco control initiatives. At the same time, government institutions, civil society organizations, health-care professionals, educators, parents, and the media must work together to protect children and youth from nicotine addiction and the influence of the tobacco industry.

The tobacco epidemic is neither inevitable nor irreversible. The solutions are known, evidence based, and cost effective. What is required now is the political will to implement them fully. On this World No Tobacco Day, Pakistan has an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the FCTC, accelerate implementation of MPOWER measures, and place the health and future of its people especially its children above the interests of an industry whose profits depend on addiction.

The choice is clear: either continue to bear the enormous human and economic costs of tobacco use or take decisive action to build a healthier, more prosperous, and tobacco-free Pakistan.

*(The writer is a public health advocate and working as a Program Manager at Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC))*

## Pakistan hockey team to resume training camp on Monday after Eid break

Sports Desk

Roberto Martinez's side are strong favourites to progress from Group K where they face DR Congo and tournament debutants Uzbekistan before the tricky test of Colombia.

Ronaldo and long-term rival Lionel Messi are set to make more history by becoming the first players to feature in six World Cups. But since finishing fourth in Ronaldo's debut tournament in 2006, Portugal have rarely threatened to go all the way despite boasting the highest goalscorer in the history of international football on 143.

Now 41, Ronaldo's presence has been seen as a major factor in Portugal sides not maximising their potential in recent tournaments. The Al-Nassr forward has failed to score in his last nine matches at the World Cup and Euros combined.

Ronaldo was even dropped by Fernando Santos in favour of Goncalo Ramos during the 2022 World Cup.

But Martinez has remained fiercely loyal to Ronaldo and with some justification. He scored in the quarter-final, semi-final and final as Portugal beat Spain on penalties to win the Nations League last year.

Ronaldo also plundered five goals in as many qualifiers before a red card against the Republic of Ireland.

A lesser light would likely have been banned for the start of the tournament, but Ronaldo escaped with just a one-match suspension.

Martinez's reasoning for backing Ronaldo also reveals a lack of other credible options up front.

Portugal's true strength lies with arguably the best collection of midfielders at the World Cup.

Paris Saint-Germain pair Vitorinha and Joao Neves line up alongside Premier League player of the year Bruno Fernandes and Bernardo Silva.

## Pakistan's Nuclear Journey

Continued from Page 4

After becoming a nuclear power, Pakistan progressed not only in defense but also in scientific and technological fields. Nuclear technology began to be utilized in energy, medicine, agriculture, and industry. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission played a vital role in energy production, cancer treatment, agricultural research, and industrial development. Thus, the nuclear program contributed not only to defense stability but also to national development.

Pakistan's nuclear journey is a shining example of determination, hard work, self-confidence, and national unity for the younger generation. Despite limited resources, international pressure, and countless challenges, the Pakistani nation proved that if a nation remains united, its leadership sincere, and its youth talented, no goal is impossible to achieve. Today, Pakistan's nuclear program is not merely a symbol of defense power but also of national dignity, sovereignty, and scientific advancement.

only on its nuclear capability but also on scientific research, technology, education, and economic stability. Nuclear power alone does not make a nation truly strong; knowledge, economy, unity, and moral stability are also fundamental pillars of national strength. Pakistan must protect its nuclear program while simultaneously encouraging the younger generation toward scientific education and research so that the country may continue progressing toward development, stability, and self-reliance in the future.

Pakistan's nuclear journey is, in reality, a national story filled with sacrifice, hard work, determination, patriotism, and scientific vision. This journey teaches us that when a nation unites for the achievement of its goals, even the greatest obstacles in the world cannot stand in its way. "Youm-e-Takbeer" is not merely the remembrance of nuclear explosions but a symbol of the determination, dignity, and defense sovereignty of the Pakistani nation. This journey will continue to remain a source of pride, courage, and self-confidence for future generations.

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## Called on

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Consul General, Stetson Sanders called on the Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani in Lahore on Saturday.



Photo: PID

## Senate Chairman Gilani meets US Consul General, discusses key areas of cooperation

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani met with U. S. Consul General Stetson Sanders in Lahore, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to strong bilateral relations with the United States.

Gilani described the relationship as a cornerstone of

Pakistan's foreign policy, built on mutual respect and shared goals.

He highlighted Pakistan's role in regional peace, including its hosting of the Islamabad Talks between the U. S. and Iran, and emphasized the need to expand cooperation in trade, investment, IT, energy, minerals, health, education, and

agriculture.

The Chairman noted the U. S. as a key economic partner and export destination, welcoming growing trade and inviting further American investment in Pakistan's key sectors.

He acknowledged U. S. efforts in facilitating a ceasefire between Pakistan and India and reiterated Pakistan's

desire for constructive regional relations while safeguarding its interests.

Gilani expressed concern over India's actions regarding the Indus Waters Treaty, calling such attempts to weaponize water detrimental to regional stability and urging international support for treaty adherence.

He stressed the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and people-to-people contacts, including exchanges between legislators and the contributions of the Pakistani diaspora and students in the U. S. Gilani expressed confidence in the continued expansion of Pakistan-U. S. relations for mutual benefit.

## Amir Muqam expresses grief over loss of lives in AJK Haveli road accident



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, on Saturday expressed profound grief and sorrow over the loss of precious human lives in a tragic road accident in Union Council Khurshidabad, Haveli

district, Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement, the minister said he was deeply saddened by the fatal accident, which resulted in multiple casualties in the area.

He extended his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families, acknowledging the immense pain and suffering caused by



the tragedy.

Engineer Amir Muqam said he stood in solidarity with the affected families during this difficult time and shared their grief.

He prayed for the eternal

peace of the departed souls and requested Allah Almighty to grant patience, courage and strength to the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss.

The minister also expressed

hope for the speedy recovery of those injured in the accident and urged the relevant authorities to provide all necessary assistance and support to the victims and their families.

## EU Foreign Policy Chief Kaja Kallas to visit Pakistan for high-level talks

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Kaja Kallas, is scheduled to visit Pakistan shortly after the Eid al-Adha for high-level discussions with the country's leadership, diplomatic sources said.

According to diplomatic sources, Kallas will arrive in Islamabad on May 31 as part of an important diplomatic engagement between Pakistan and the European Union.

During her visit, the EU foreign policy chief is expected to hold bilateral talks with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign



Minister, Ishaq Dar. Discussions are likely to focus on bilateral relations, regional

developments, economic cooperation and international issues of mutual interest.

Sources said Kallas is expected to meet senior Pakistani leaders during her stay

in Islamabad, reflecting the growing importance of Pakistan-EU engagement on a range of political, economic and security matters.

Diplomatic circles view the visit as particularly significant against the backdrop of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, tensions involving the United States, Israel and Iran, as well as the broader global energy and economic challenges facing many countries.

The visit is expected to provide an opportunity for both sides to exchange views on regional and international developments, strengthen diplomatic cooperation and explore avenues for enhanced partnership between Pakistan and the European Union.

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## No change in Pakistan's stance on Palestine issue: Dar



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar has maintained that Pakistan is increasingly being recognized as a peacemaking state worldwide.

During an interaction with US-based Pakistani media in Washington on Friday, Ishaq Dar emphasized that the global community views Pakistan with respect due to its collective efforts toward peace.

The Deputy Prime Minister said he had a cordial meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who expressed deep appreciation for Pakistan's contributions to regional

peace and stability.

Terming his US visit highly successful, the Deputy Prime Minister said he held several important meetings with key international leaders.

Regarding the Palestine issue, Ishaq Dar said that he effectively highlighted Pakistan's principled stance during his address at the United Nations.

He said Pakistan maintains a position on the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent, viable, and contiguous state of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al Sharif as its capital.

## Pakistan begins Hajj return flights at Islamabad airport



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Aviation Authority (PAA) said the first Hajj return flight has arrived at Islamabad International Airport, marking the start of the post-Hajj repatriation operation.

According to the PAA, the first Hajj flight PK-742 landed at 7:15 pm, carrying 165 pilgrims back to Pakistan. With its arrival, the return phase of Hajj pilgrims has officially begun at Islamabad Airport.

The authority confirmed that the

repatriation process will continue until June 30 as per the schedule.

On June 1, a total of 5 flights are expected to land in Islamabad, 4 in Karachi, and 4 in Lahore. Meanwhile, 3 flights each are scheduled for Multan and Sialkot, 2 for Faisalabad, and 1 for Quetta.

During the post-Hajj operation, a total of 119,000 pilgrims who performed Hajj under the government scheme will be brought back home through 471 flights. The operation involves coordination between Pakistani government, private, and Saudi airlines.

## Ch Shujaat holds talks with PML-Q leader Nadeem Pehalwan

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid) PML-Q President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain held a meeting with party's Lahore Chapter General Secretary Nadeem Pehalwan on Saturday.

Punjab Minister for Industries and Trade Chaudhry Shafay Hussain was

also present on the occasion.

Nadeem Pehalwan exchanged Eid greetings with Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and Chaudhry Shafay Hussain.

During the meeting, Nadeem Pehalwan apprised Chaudhry Shujaat about the performance of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid Lahore chapter.

## Think Tank wants provinces to share burden of defence expenditures as well

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Policy and Business Development think tank has proposed an increase in salaries and pensions of the armed forces in recommendations submitted ahead of the upcoming federal budget.

According to the proposals, the think tank Economic Policy and Business Development has recommended that salaries of the armed forces be enhanced and pensions reviewed in line with the recommendations of the Pay and Pension Commission.

The recommendations also suggest increasing funding for development projects related to the armed forces and ensuring adequate allocation for operational preparedness, including resources for potential wartime contingencies.

The think tank further proposed that the National Finance Commission consider a mechanism for sharing defence expenditures with provincial governments in the upcoming budget cycle.

It also emphasized that sufficient funds should be allocated to address security-related requirements and emerging strategic challenges.

According to the estimates cited in the recommendations, defence expenditure is projected to reach Rs 2,750 billion in the current fiscal year, while the upcoming budget could see the figure rise to approximately Rs 2,959 billion.

The proposals have emerged as part of broader policy inputs being reviewed ahead of budget formulation, highlighting fiscal pressures and evolving expenditure needs in the defence sector.