



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم سے سو کیوں اسما میں نے بیان کیا انہوں نے کہا ہم سے وہیب بن خالد نے بیان کیا انہوں نے کہا ہم سے عمرو بن لُحی نے بیان کیا ان سے عباد بن تمیم نے بیان کیا اور ان سے عبد اللہ بن زید انصاری نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم اس خبر کا پیش استقامت کا جامکے لیے نظر اور بارش کی دعا کی پھر آپ قبلہ رخ ہوئے اور اپنی چادر کو پھانسا۔ (بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6343)  
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## Blue Moon in Pakistan Skies Tonight

According to astronomers, tonight's blue moon is the second full moon of May 2026, making it a rare celestial event that only appears once every two to three years. Despite its name, a blue moon does not actually appear blue. The term is used in astronomy to describe the second full moon that occurs in the same calendar month.



## Governor Balochistan highlights youth empowerment agenda in upcoming budget

Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has announced that the upcoming 2026-27 annual budget will place special focus on empowering the province's youth through education, skills development, and employment opportunities.

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## Security Alerts

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel stand alert at closed Faisal Avenue as the Faisal Mosque closed for public during Eid Al-Adha holidays, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## IMF pushes for GST hike in Pakistan, officials voice inflation concerns

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has proposed increasing Pakistan's general sales tax (GST) rate from 18 percent to 19 percent in the next fiscal year's budget, according to sources. Pakistani officials have opposed the move, citing concerns over rising inflation. Sources familiar with the matter said a one per cent increase in GST could generate an additional Rs 250 billion to Rs 300 billion for the national exchequer. Budget discussions are also considering higher taxes on solar panels, electric vehicles, and hybrid vehicles.



18 per cent and on electric vehicles from 1 per cent to 18 per cent, while the GST rate on solar panels could be increased from 10 per cent to 18 per cent. Implementation of these proposals may lead to significant price increases for electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles, and solar energy systems.

Reports indicate a recommendation is under review to raise the sales tax on hybrid vehicles from 8 per cent to

Officials at the Finance Ministry and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) said that no such proposals are currently under consideration and final budget decisions will be made at the appropriate time.

## IRGC commander: Trump faces 'bad or worse' choices on Iran



Agencies

ISLAMABAD: A senior commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has said that US President Donald Trump has no favourable options regarding Iran and must choose between a "bad" or "worse" course of action.

paths forward: the bad path or the worse path," Javani said, according to Iranian state media.

IRGC Deputy for Political Affairs, Second Brigadier General Yadollah Javani, said on Saturday that Trump was confronting the consequences of what he described as a failed military strategy against Iran.

He said the US president must either recognise what he described as the conditions and rights of the Iranian nation or continue what he called an "aggressive war" against Iran.

"Trump, whose defeat in the war has become evident to anyone, now faces two

Javani said the United States and Israel had miscalculated in launching a large-scale offensive, adding that their objectives had included targeting Iran's nuclear and missile capabilities and attempting to weaken its political system.

He claimed that Iran had gained a stronger regional position, including influence over the Strait of Hormuz, and said Tehran had set out its conditions for resolving the current standoff, leaving Washington to respond.

# Protected Consumers to Keep Electricity Subsidies: Minister Refutes Withdrawal Claims

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy Owais Leghari clarified that the government is not withdrawing electricity subsidies for protected consumers, refuting reports suggesting otherwise as inaccurate. He stated that the number of protected consumers has grown significantly, with approximately 86 percent of domestic consumers currently receiving subsidized electricity.

The volume of these subsidies has also increased substantially, with additional support provided to the agricultural and domestic sectors. Eligible consumers will continue to benefit through a QR code-based system, and a registration mechanism has been implemented to ensure subsidies reach deserving individuals. In terms of power sector reforms, Leghari highlighted substantial savings achieved through the review of Independent Power

Producers (IPPs) agreements, reductions in distribution losses, and a decline in circular debt. The sale of surplus machinery also contributed to savings. These reforms, he asserted, have lowered electricity generation and distribution costs, benefiting consumers directly and easing the burden on the national exchequer and industrial consumers through reduced cross-subsidies. Leghari detailed significant electricity tariff reductions

across all consumer categories, including protected, domestic, industrial, commercial, agricultural, and bulk consumers, as well as in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. These reductions are attributed to reforms and increased reliance on domestic energy resources. Regarding the energy transition, the minister projected a substantial increase in the share of clean energy and electricity generation from local resources in Pakistan's power mix by 2035,

with renewable energy already forming a significant portion. He emphasized that the government supports solar energy adoption, introducing measures to enhance transparency and efficiency rather than discouraging its use. The National Energy Plan includes distributed solar energy, and recent net billing policy changes are not expected to impact the majority of domestic consumers or single-phase residential solar users.

## India's domestic issues force its leaders to make anti-Pakistan statements

News Desk



ISLAMABAD: The Indian army chief's recent statement in which he had hinted at launching Operation Sindoor-II against Pakistan is an attempt to divert attention from his country's internal issues.

It is after suffering defeat at the hands of Pakistan in Marka-e-Haq and failing to achieve its political objectives that Indian military and civilian leaders have once more resorted to making anti-Pakistan statements.

Pakistan's rising stature in the world and India's diplomatic failures have once again forced the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government to talk about military adventures.

The Indian army chief, in his statement, had himself admitted that in modern warfare, every movement was noticed by enemy forces and nothing could be concealed from them.

The statement has come at a time when there is a lot of opposition to PM Modi's flawed policies at home, and this is the growing pressure on the Indian government that has forced it to make such inflammatory statements.

## Israeli troops capture Lebanon castle, marking deepest incursion since 2000

Reuters

Israeli forces have captured a strategic mountain and the Crusader-era Beaufort Castle in southern Lebanon, marking their deepest military incursion into the country in more than 25 years, the Israeli military said on Sunday.

The takeover of the fortress, located near the city of Nabatiyeh, followed days of heavy fighting and air strikes in surrounding villages, where Israeli troops engaged Hezbollah fighters in the rugged terrain, according to military statements.

Israel said the operation was launched several days ago in the Beaufort Ridge area and the adjacent Suluki Valley to dismantle Hezbollah infrastructure and remove what it described as "direct threats to Israeli civilians."

The army added that it was prepared to expand the operation if necessary.

Israeli military spokes-



person Avichay Adrae posted images on social media showing troops at the site, while Defence Minister Israel Katz said Israeli forces had raised the national flag over the castle.

The site was previously held by Israel between 1982 and its withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. The advance comes despite a nominal ceasefire in place since April 17 and ahead of scheduled indirect talks in Washington on June 2 and 3.

Israeli troops have reportedly crossed the Litani River, a former de facto boundary, and are operating in villages closer to Nabatiyeh, roughly 5 kilometres away, with evacuation warnings issued for nearby towns including Tyre.

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# Joint Public Action Committee welcomes the negotiation process, June 9 protest call maintained

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZZAFFARABAD: The Jammu and Kashmir Joint Public Action Committee has welcomed the negotiation process with the federal government's High Power Committee and indicated its participation in the upcoming negotiations. However, the committee has also announced to maintain the June 9 protest call as per its previous announcement.

According to the statement of the Action Committee, progress has been made on some issues during the negotiations, but important issues are still to be resolved. The committee says that the protest option will remain in place until the public demands are approved, however, the process of negotiations will continue to resolve the issues.

On the other hand, after the negotiations, Federal Minister and Advisor to



the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah told the media that it has been agreed to convene an all-party conference to take all political and social stakeholders into confidence on the issue



of refugee seats, while the next round of negotiations will be held next week. According to political observers, the willingness of the parties to continue negotiations, as well as the decision of



the Public Action Committee to maintain the protest call, indicates that the issues have not yet been fully resolved, but the door to talks is open and there is potential for progress.

## PPP Azad Kashmir President Cautiously Optimistic on Negotiation Progress



**Bureau Report**

MUZZAFFARABAD: President Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin has said that when the negotiation process moves forward, good results also come out.

The negotiations were held in a good atmosphere. The attitude of the Public Action Committee is also positive and no one has shown any stubbornness.

There is a desire to resolve the issue from both sides and, God willing, a positive solution will come out. He expressed these views while talking to journalists after the negotiations yesterday.

He said that there are some complications that need to be resolved legally and constitutionally.

The government of Pakistan and the government of Azad Kashmir want a solution with seriousness and patience. He said that people like former Prime Minister of Pakistan Raja Pervez Ashraf, ministers Rana Sanaullah Ahsan Iqbal, former minister Qamar-uz-Zaman Kaira and Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore are included in the committee, so one should have good hope. He said that the unsolved demands will also be resolved.

He said that this is not a matter of someone's defeat or someone's victory, it is a matter of the state and both sides are showing seriousness.

## Deepening water crisis affecting millions of Karachi households: Altaf Shakoor

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: Karachi faces a severe water crisis, with a daily shortfall of about 600 million gallons, impacting over 20 million residents. Pasban Democratic Party Chairman Altaf Shakoor highlighted that the city requires over 1,200 MGD but receives only 550-650 MGD. This scarcity forces many households to rely on expensive private water tankers, straining family budgets already burdened by inflation. The crisis also raises public health concerns due to limited access to clean water and poor sanitation. Contributing factors include population growth, aging infrastructure, leakages, illegal connections, water theft, underinvestment, and the delayed K-4 project. Shakoor urged the government to prioritize improving water infrastructure, reducing losses, and accelerating water supply projects to ensure reliable and affordable access, stressing that it's a fundamental human right and crucial for social stability and economic productivity.

## Youm-e-Takbeer is a Glorious Chapter of National Pride: Sheikh Abdul Waheed

**City Desk**



RAWALPINDI: President of Anjuman Tajran Liaquat Road Rawalpindi, Sheikh Abdul Waheed, said in his message on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbeer that May 28, 1998, is a golden and memorable day in Pakistan's history. On this day, the nation demonstrated unity, determination, and courage, proving to the world that Pakistan possesses the capability to defend its freedom, sovereignty, and national security.

He described Youm-e-Takbeer as a symbol of national dignity, defensive stability, and invincible strength. In his statement, Sheikh Abdul Waheed said that this historic day earned Pakistan the distinction of becoming the first nuclear power in the Muslim world and permanently thwarted the hostile designs of its enemies. He added that the day conveys a message of national solidarity, unity, and love for the homeland. He said that the entire nation pays tribute to its armed forces, scientists, and all patriotic individuals whose sacrifices and efforts made Pakistan's defense impregnable. Sheikh Abdul Waheed expressed confidence that the Pakistani nation will remain united in facing all internal and external challenges and will continue striving for the country's security, progress, and prosperity while keeping the spirit of Youm-e-Takbeer alive.

## Khidmat Markaz F-6 offers round-the-clock police services to citizens

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police Khidmat Markaz F-6 is providing round-the-clock police services to citizens, ensuring fast, transparent and citizen-friendly facilitation under one roof.

An official told APP on Sunday that the Khidmat Markaz remained open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, enabling residents to access a wide range of police services at their convenience.

The official said citizens could avail facilities including police character certificates, general police verification, tenant registration, domestic employee registration, lost document reports, vehicle verification and other public service-related documentation.

## Condolences

Minister for Information, Religious Affairs and Auqaf of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nayyar, visited the residence of former Minister for Health and Member of the Assembly Dr. Nisar Ansar Abdali and expressed his condolences on the passing of his daughter.



# Sardar Attique Khan Slams Refugee Disenfranchisement, Questions Plebiscite Validity

**Bureau Report**

DHIRKOT / RAWALPINDI: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, led a rally in Minhasa Dhirkot.

He criticized the Action Committee for allegedly sabotaging the Kashmir freedom movement and plebiscite by disenfranchising refugees. Khan questioned how a plebiscite could be demanded while making Gilgit-Baltistan a province and denying refugees their voting rights.

He warned that denying millions of Kashmiris their right to vote would



destroy their identity and end the freedom movement.

Khan praised the rally participants' spirit and stated the Muslim Conference's message was being conveyed. He emphasized resolving disputes peace-

fully and stressed politicians' duty to provide facilities, not as favors but as rights earned through representation.

He lauded Dhirkot's people for their integrity, refusing to bargain their principles for short-term gains. Khan

stated that the Muslim Conference refused power offers to protect the legacy of "Mujahid e Awwal" Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, asserting that power and sustenance are in Allah's hands.

He affirmed the party's commitment to the ideology of Pakistan's accession and strengthening ties between Kashmiris and Pakistan. Khan expressed gratitude to Pakistan, its people, and the army, commending General Asim Munir and urging support for national institutions.

He concluded with slogans praising Pakistan, its army, and the Kashmir freedom movement.

# Causes of Pressure-Based Journalism in Pakistan

Across the world, journalism is considered a highly important and influential field that plays a fundamental role in shaping public opinion, ensuring government accountability, and raising social awareness. However, in practical terms, journalism in Pakistan is exposed to various forms of pressure. As a result, it sometimes deviates from its core purpose of impartial reporting of facts and takes the form of what is often referred to as "pressure-based journalism." This situation is not limited to any single individual or institution but reflects a broader systemic issue rooted in economic, institutional, political, and ethical factors.

One of the most prominent causes of pressure-based journalism in Pakistan is economic instability. Many journalists, especially field reporters, face low salaries, job insecurity, and a lack of

resources. Under such financial pressure, journalistic principles can sometimes become secondary, and some individuals may be inclined to adopt questionable practices to generate additional income. In such cases, news—which should serve as a responsible means of communication—can become a tool for personal gain.

Similarly, the financial structure of media organizations also contributes to this trend, as most media houses rely heavily on advertising revenue. Advertisers, whether public or private institutions, can sometimes indirectly influence editorial policies. As a result, certain news stories are suppressed, others are presented in a softened tone, and some are highlighted according to specific interests. This financial dependency has created a delicate and complex relationship between journalism and business interests.

Furthermore, the lack of effective

institutional oversight and enforcement of journalistic ethics is another major factor. Although journalistic organizations and codes of conduct exist, their implementation remains weak. The absence of self-regulation and timely complaint resolution allows some individuals to exploit news for personal or group interests. In such circumstances, the ethical standards of journalism—which form the foundation of its credibility and dignity—are compromised.

Political and administrative influence also plays a significant role in strengthening this trend. In Pakistan, the relationship between media and state institutions has always been complex, where various political parties

and government bodies sometimes attempt to use the media for their own benefit or against opponents. In such an environment, some journalists may also use news as a tool of pressure to gain or maintain influence, thereby disturbing journalistic balance.

Moreover, with the expansion of modern media, a large number of untrained and unprofessional individuals have entered the field. While social media and digital platforms have accelerated news dissemination, they have also affected verification standards. In this fast-paced and competitive environment, unverified information or sensational content is sometimes prioritized, further increasing the trend of pressure-based journalism.

In addition, weaknesses in the legal system further complicate the issue. Legal action against defamation, false reporting, or unethical pressure is often lengthy, costly, and ineffective. As a result, some individuals do not feel a real fear of accountability. Consequently, they may use journalism as a tool to exert influence and pressure.

Some journalists project an image of honesty and integrity, yet their underlying motive may sometimes be financial gain. In certain cases, news reporting is not used purely as a tool for public interest journalism but rather as a means to exert pressure on government officials or institutions for personal or professional benefit.

This practice can be described as "Gatekeeping Abuse," which refers to the misuse of editorial control over information—commonly known as the "gatekeeping" role of journalism. Instead of filtering and presenting news based on accuracy, relevance, and public interest, the gatekeeping function is manipulated to influence individuals or institutions. In such situations, information may be selectively published, exaggerated, delayed, or suppressed in order to create leverage.

When gatekeeping is abused, journalism shifts away from its ethical foundation and becomes a tool of influence or pressure. This not only undermines public trust in the media but also distorts the flow of information within society. In short, pressure-based journalism in Pakistan is not the result of a single cause but a multidimensional issue involving economic instability, institutional gaps, political interference, ethical decline, and legal weaknesses. Its solution lies not merely in individual criticism but in systemic reforms that can restore journalism to its true purpose—truth, impartiality, and public interest.



**Zain-ul-Abideen Abid**



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**  
 Fajr ..... 3:18 am  
 Zohr ..... 12:05 pm  
 Asr ..... 5:04 pm  
 Maghrib ..... 7:12 pm  
 Isha ..... 8:54 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
 Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**COMPLAINTS**

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

**OGDCL makes 19 oil, gas discoveries since 2023**

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has made 19 oil and gas discoveries across Sindh, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since 2023, marking a major boost to Pakistan's energy security and a key step toward cutting reliance on expensive fuel imports.

According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the discoveries carry an estimated cumulative production potential of around 17,123 barrels per day (BPD) of oil and 151 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) of gas, said a press release.

The finds are expected to generate daily import substitution worth nearly Rs1.2 billion.

Five discoveries were made during FY2023-24, contributing 481 BPD of oil and 29.66 MMSCFD of gas, with an estimated daily import substitution of Rs283.48 million.

Another five discoveries were recorded in FY2024-25, adding 947 BPD of oil and 34.49 MMSCFD of gas, while reducing import costs by Rs279.70 million per day.

# CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif calls tobacco silent killer, urges people to quit smoking

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, in her message on World No Tobacco Day, said that smoking could prove more dangerous than many fatal diseases and described

use of tobacco as a silent epidemic affecting public health, society and the economy. She added that every puff of tobacco is a step towards a new disease, adding that smoking is not merely a habit but a self-destructive act against one's own health, finances and social well-being.



She highlighted that Punjab government is taking measures to ensure a complete ban on smoking in schools, colleges and other educational institutions; and underscored that smoking in government offices, public transport and other public places is a punishable offence, and strict implementation of the law would be ensured.

Chief Minister Punjab said that protecting younger generation from

tobacco use remains a priority and that all possible steps would be taken to discourage smoking and vaping among youth.

She added that raising awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco is not only government's responsibility but also a collective social obligation. She expressed concern over statistics showing that more than 250,000 deaths in the country are linked to tobacco use; and

noted that smoking and vaping could be major contributors to heart attacks among young people. She urged citizens to provide their loved ones with a healthy, smoke-free environment and appealed to the public to quit smoking and adopt a healthier lifestyle from today onwards. She said, "Let us pledge to abandon tobacco use and work towards a healthier and safer future for ourselves and the coming generations."

## Traffic jam

ISLAMABAD: A view of traffic jam Damn-e-Koh Road, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Youm-e-Takbeer Symbolizes Pakistan's Sovereignty and National Strength, Asma Butt

**City Desk**

RAWALPINDI: Chief Executive of Dolphin Communication, Ms. Asma Butt, said that Youm-e-Takbeer marks a historic milestone in Pakistan's history, reflecting the nation's unity, sovereignty, and defensive strength.

She stated that May 28 made Pakistan the first nuclear power in the Muslim world and demonstrated the nation's resolve to safeguard its freedom and national interests.

She paid tribute to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's scientists, and the Armed Forces for their contributions to this achievement. Ms. Butt said that Youm-e-Takbeer is not only a celebration of a historic success but also a reminder of the importance of national unity, stability, and progress. She congratulated the nation on the occasion and prayed for Pakistan's peace, security, and prosperity.



# Village Baloo Lashari Holds Grand Reception for Abid Lashari on Prestigious Tamgha-e-Imtiaz Award

**News Desk**

SEHWAN: The residents and notables of Village Baloo Lashari near Sehwan organized a grand reception in honor of Abid Lashari, Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, to celebrate his receipt of Pakistan's prestigious civil award.

Among those present were Haji Arbab Lashari, Haji Nawab Lashari, Advocate Azizullah Lashari, Bahadur Lashari, and other community elders and distinguished guests. Speaking on the occasion, the participants praised the lifelong services and achievements of Abid Lashari in

the fields of disability rights, rehabilitation, and social development. They stated that the conferment of Tamgha-e-Imtiaz upon Abid Lashari is not only a personal honor but a matter of pride for

the entire Lashari community.

The speakers congratulated Abid Lashari on this prestigious recognition and expressed their best wishes for his continued success in serving humanity.



## AJK Elections Set for Early June Amidst Commission Preparations

**Bureau Report**

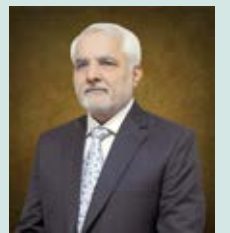
MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission announced that general elections must be held within sixty days before the Legislative Assembly's term expires, with the current term beginning August 3. The election schedule will be issued at least forty-five days prior. Consequently, the next general elections are scheduled for the first week of June, with formal activities commencing afterwards. The Commission is preparing for transparent, free, fair, and impartial elections, coordinating with relevant institutions for a smooth process.



## MEPCO CEO Orders Uninterrupted Power for 2026 Exams

**Quratulain Asim**

MULTAN: Multan Electric Power Supply Company (MEPCO) CEO Engineer Gul Muhammad Zahid has ordered uninterrupted electricity supply to all examination centers during the 2026 annual exams. Superintending Engineers for Multan, Bahawalpur, Khanewal, and Vehari have been directed to ensure power from 9 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 5:30 pm for feeders supplying these centers. Special supervision will monitor these feeders to maintain continuous power throughout exam hours, preventing any disruptions for students. Negligence will not be tolerated, and officers must fulfill their duties professionally to provide a conducive examination environment.



## Smoking has become a silent killer for human health worldwide: Dr. Madani

**Iram Asim**

MULTAN: Dr. Muhammad Akmal Madani highlights the alarming rise of tobacco use, including cigarettes, shisha, gutka, and snuff, among Pakistan's youth, labeling smoking a global "silent killer" responsible for millions of deaths annually. He emphasizes that tobacco's toxic chemicals damage nearly every organ, leading to severe health issues such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, stroke, cancer, and a weakened immune system. Smoking is particularly perilous for individuals with pre-existing heart conditions, diabetes, or hypertension, significantly increasing their risk of heart attack and stroke by harming blood vessels. What begins as a casual habit often escalates into a formidable addiction. Dr. Madani calls for a concerted effort from parents, educators, organizations, and the media to educate the younger generation about these dangers. He asserts that fostering a healthy society is crucial for national development and urges collective action and awareness campaigns to combat this pervasive issue and secure a healthier future for upcoming generations.



## FAPUASA Sounds Alarm on Underfunded Higher Education, Cites Stagnant HEC Budget

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Associations (FAPUASA) is urging the Pakistani government to implement urgent policy reforms to rescue the higher education sector, which faces a severe financial and administrative crisis. FAPUASA President Prof. Dr. Aamir Ali highlighted that chronic underfunding, with the Higher Education Commission's budget stagnant since 2017-18 despite increased costs and university numbers, is undermining academic quality and research. Key demands include a substantial increase in the HEC budget, the approval and notification of long-awaited salary revisions for Tenure Track System (TTS) faculty, and the introduction of comprehensive death benefits and social protection for TTS staff. FAPUASA also called for the restoration of the tax rebate for university teachers and researchers, which was abolished in 2025 after a gradual reduction from 75 percent. Furthermore, the federation reiterated its demand for the immediate implementation of a uniform promotion policy for Basic Pay Scale (BPS) faculty across all Pakistani universities. Dr. Ali warned that continued neglect risks accelerating brain drain and weakening Pakistan's research and innovation capabilities. Vice President Dr. M. Farooq Iqbal Buzdar stressed that investing in higher education is a strategic national imperative for sustainable economic growth and national development. FAPUASA remains committed to protecting academic staff interests and hopes the government will prioritize higher education for Pakistan's future.

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# Trump Ensured the Downfall of America as a Superpower

**A**s tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz intensified, an extraordinary pattern emerged: countries that once looked first to Washington reportedly began seeking direct or indirect understandings with Tehran to secure the safe passage of their commercial shipping. The reported movement of French vessels, followed by Japanese energy shipments and commercial traffic linked to other Asian nations, signaled something far more important than maritime navigation. It suggested that nations facing urgent economic pressures were increasingly willing to bypass Washington and pursue their interests through direct diplomacy with Iran through a trusted mediator mostly likely Pakistan.

The significance of this development extends far beyond the safe passage of a few ships. It strikes at the heart of the post-Cold War international order, in which the United States positioned itself as the indispensable power capable of organizing coalitions, managing crises, and guaranteeing security. If nations increasingly discover that they can protect their interests through direct engagement rather than through American mediation, then a fundamental pillar of U. S. global influence begins to weaken. The issue is not whether Iran has replaced the United States as a superpower; the issue is that countries are becoming less dependent on Washington to solve their most urgent problems.

In doing so they are following the suggestions of Donald Trump who has repeatedly asked these countries whose economies depended on these shipments to assume the responsibility to escort their oil, gas and commerce through the Hormuz waterway.

Yet rather than assembling large military convoys and risking confrontation, several nations appeared to favor a different approach. They sought dialogue, practical arrangements, and diplomatic channels aimed at ensuring uninterrupted trade. In doing so, they highlighted an uncomfortable reality for Washington: military power may command attention, but economic survival often drives nations toward diplomacy.

A second consequence of the Hormuz crisis is the perception that the balance of negotiating leverage has shifted. For decades, Washington typically entered major negotiations from a position of overwhelming strength, dictating timelines, conditions, and outcomes.

In the current environment, however, Tehran holds stronger cards than at any previous stage of the confrontation. From this perspective, any future memorandum of understanding would likely begin not with Iranian concessions but with Iranian security demands.

Tehran's priority would be obtaining credible guarantees against future military action, securing relief from economic sanctions, regaining access to frozen assets, and establishing a framework that reduces the threat posed by the extensive network of foreign military bases surrounding Iran.

Only after those issues are addressed would more contentious subjects—such as uranium enrichment levels, missile and drone programs, regional security arrangements, maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz, and broader regional disputes—move to the center of negotiations. Whether these demands are accepted is another matter entirely, but the fact that such proposals are now openly discussed reflects how dramatically perceptions of leverage have changed.

The emergence of this new reality did not occur in isolation. It followed years of growing dissatisfaction among allies and partners with the direction of American foreign policy. President Donald Trump's tariff policies targeted allies and competitors alike, creating uncertainty across global markets. Longstanding partners increasingly found themselves treated less as strategic allies and more as bargaining chips in transactional negotiations. Proposals regarding Canada,

pressure on European allies over Greenland, and disputes over trade and security obligations contributed to a perception that Washington had become increasingly unpredictable.

As a result, many governments began quietly exploring alternatives. Europe, in particular, has undergone a strategic awakening. European leaders increasingly emphasize strategic autonomy and independent decision-making. The Hormuz crisis reinforced this trend. Rather than simply following Washington's preferred course, governments demonstrated a willingness to pursue their own diplomatic initiatives to ensure that European economic interests were not held hostage to geopolitical confrontation.

At the same time, Europe has been expanding economic engagement with China. Increasingly, policymakers view Beijing as a dominant economic actor that must be engaged, while viewing Washington as a partner whose policies can shift dramatically from one administration to another. This represents a significant strategic challenge for American leadership because trust, once lost, is difficult to rebuild.

The Gulf region is also confronting new realities. For decades, American military bases were viewed as symbols of security and stability. Yet growing regional tensions have led GCC countries to question whether these installations now attract risk rather than defending them.

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## India's Chenab-Beas Link: A Threat to the Indus Waters Treaty and Regional Stability

**I**ndia's plan to divert water from the Chenab river system into the Beas basin through a \$245 million Chenab-Beas Link Tunnel in Himachal Pradesh should alarm Pakistan and all those concerned with regional stability and international water law.

The project is more than another hydropower or irrigation scheme. It signals a dangerous shift in how India interprets the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), one of the world's most durable water-sharing agreements. The core issue is whether Chenab water, a "western river" allocated mainly to Pakistan under the treaty, can legally be transferred outside its natural basin. For Pakistan, the treaty's spirit is clear: the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab must remain protected for its unrestricted use, with only limited, defined uses permitted to India. Diverting Chenab water into the Beas basin undermines both the legal framework and the mutual trust the treaty requires.

The proposed 8.7-km tunnel beneath the Pir Panjal range would take water from the Chandra River, an upper Chenab tributary, plus a barrage in the fragile Lahaul-Spiti region. India may claim this falls within permissible uses and won't reduce downstream flows. But inter-basin transfers set a precedent that threatens millions of livelihoods dependent on the Chenab for agriculture, irrigation and hydropower. Even the perception of upstream manipulation creates uncertainty in a country already facing water scarcity, climate stress and low storage capacity. The timing worsens concerns.

The project comes amid strained bilateral ties and after India placed IWT cooperation "in abeyance" last year. Together, these steps suggest water is being viewed strategically rather than as a shared resource requiring cooperation. The stakes extend beyond bilateral relations. The IWT survived wars and crises as a rare example of water diplomacy between hostile neighbors. Weakening it now sends a troubling signal to other regions with transboundary water disputes. Pakistan's response must be technical and legal, not just rhetorical. Slogans won't work in international forums.

Islamabad should immediately prepare a hydrological and legal dossier to test whether the diversion violates treaty provisions on western rivers. The matter should first go to the Permanent Indus Commission, and if needed, to a Neutral Expert or Court of Arbitration. Diplomatically, Pakistan should engage the World Bank and international community, framing this as a regional water security and environmental issue, not just a bilateral dispute. Environmental risks also matter: Indian groups warn that large-scale Himalayan tunneling and dams increase landslide, flash flood and ecological degradation risks. Ultimately, this is about whether international agreements can withstand nationalism, climate pressure and strategic rivalry. The IWT endured 60+ years because both sides kept water insulated from conflict. Preserving that principle is more urgent than ever.



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

## Yaum e Takbeer: Remembering the Day That Secured Our Future

**Y**aum e Takbeer, observed on May 28, commemorates Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests and symbolizes national pride, sovereignty, and strategic security. Celebrated throughout Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi, Balochistan, and the rest of the country, the day marks Pakistan's rise as a declared nuclear power and the end of strategic vulnerability in South Asia. The occasion carries renewed significance because of the combination of Pakistan's nuclear deterrent and strengthened conventional military capabilities, forming a dual-layered defense shield that shapes regional power calculations and allows the country to pursue stability and development without fear of external domination. Pakistan maintained for decades that it did not initiate the South Asian nuclear race and exercised restraint after India's 1974 "Smiling Buddha" test while gradually building its own capability. Leaders including Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, General Zia-ul-Haq, and Nawaz Sharif proposed nuclear-free arrangements, mutual inspections, and strategic restraint, but these efforts were rejected by India. Tensions escalated in May 1998 when India, under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the BJP government, conducted the Pokhran-II tests, creating fears of permanent Indian nuclear dominance and reducing the effectiveness of Pakistan's smaller conventional forces. Amid sanctions, international pressure, and appeals from U. S. President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif authorized Pakistan's response after scientists including Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, Dr. Samar Mubarakmand, and Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad confirmed their readiness. On May 28, 1998,

Pakistan detonated five nuclear devices in the Ras Koh hills of Chagai, followed by a sixth test in Kharan on May 29, transforming the country from a threshold nuclear state into a declared and operational nuclear power. The tests ranged from boosted-fission weapons of 25-36 kilotons to smaller tactical devices, were confirmed internationally through seismic readings, and were followed by Nawaz Sharif's announcement that Pakistan had secured its future and established peace through strength. Nationwide celebrations erupted with prayers, sweets, and public rejoicing over what many believed ensured that the trauma of the 1971 breakup of Pakistan would never recur.

The nuclear arsenal became the foundation of Pakistan's deterrence strategy against a much larger India with superior numbers in tanks, aircraft, naval assets, and personnel, making the cost of large-scale war unacceptable. Tactical nuclear weapons such as the Nasr missile were developed to counter India's "Cold Start" doctrine and maintain full-spectrum deterrence at every level of conflict. This deterrent was reinforced by major improvements in conventional military power through operations like Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad, which weakened militant groups and strengthened the armed forces. The Pakistan Air Force modernized with JF-17 Thunder Block III fighters, AESA radars, PL-15 missiles, and J-10CE aircraft; the Pakistan Navy expanded through Type 054 frigates, Hangor-class submarines, Gwadar port development under CPEC, and vessels such as PNS Babur; and the Pakistan Army upgraded its tanks, artillery, infantry equipment, and precision weapon systems. The 2019 Pulwama crisis and the downing of an

Indian MiG-21 reinforced confidence in Pakistan's military capabilities, while the nuclear deterrent remained the central guarantee preventing escalation into full-scale war. On Yaum e Takbeer, the nation collectively honors the political leaders, scientists, engineers, technicians, soldiers, workers, and administrators who contributed to the nuclear program over decades of secrecy and hardship. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto initiated the vision for a nuclear deterrent after the 1971 war and launched the project at the 1972 Multan Meeting with his pledge to obtain the bomb regardless of sacrifice. General Zia-ul-Haq provided state protection and support throughout the 1980s despite Western pressure, while Nawaz Sharif authorized the final tests despite international condemnation and threats of sanctions. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan built the Kahuta Research Laboratories and became associated with Pakistan's uranium enrichment program, while Munir Ahmad Khan and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission advanced plutonium production and weaponization through facilities such as Khushab. Dr. Samar Mubarakmand supervised the design, preparation, diagnostics, and detonation process at Chagai, and scientists including Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad, Dr. Muhammad Hafeez Qureshi, Dr. Riazuddin, Dr. Masood Ahmad, and Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood contributed to weapon design, metallurgy, geology, reactor development, and coordination of the program. Equal tribute is extended to the anonymous engineers, truck drivers, security personnel, soldiers, civil workers, and administrative staff who secretly transported materials, protected facilities, built infrastructure, and sustained the program for years, with their collective sacrifice regarded as the foundation of Pakistan's nuclear capability and national defense.

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

## Revising History: The West's Dangerous Flirtation with Nazism

**I**n the shifting sands of geopolitics, history is not merely remembered—it is often rewritten. The recent revelations of Western leaders with Nazi ancestry, coupled with symbolic gestures by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, underscore a troubling trend: the normalization of Nazi lineage and ideology in the service of contemporary strategic aims. What was once a moral scar is now reframed as a badge of utility in the West's contest with Russia.

The symbolism is stark. Zelensky kneeling at the grave of Nazi collaborator Andriy Melnyk, and naming elite military units after "UPA Heroes" notorious for massacring Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, has provoked outrage in Israel and fury in Poland. Germany, long self-appointed as Europe's moral compass, finds itself uncomfortably silent. This silence reflects a deeper recalibration of historical narratives to fit present needs.

The West's strategic calculus is clear: in its drive to destabilize Russia and exploit her resources, Nazism is being repurposed. Nazi descendants are not shunned but elevated into leadership positions. The UK's new MI6 chief, Blaise Metreveli, is the granddaughter of Constantine Dobrowolski, a Nazi collaborator whose crimes are documented in German archives. Friedrich Merz, Germany's "Black-Rock Chancellor," descends from Josef Paul Sauvigny, a Nazi mayor who named streets after Hitler and Goebbels. Annalena Baerbock, once Germany's foreign minister and now President of the UN General Assembly, also traces lineage to Nazi officials. Canada's Chrystia Freeland

and Georgia's Salome Zurbishvili complete this troubling roster.

The pattern is unmistakable: ancestry once considered a liability is now reframed as irrelevant, even advantageous, in the West's ideological war against Russia. This is not merely genealogy—it is the rehabilitation of narratives that once plunged humanity into its darkest abyss.

History offers sobering parallels. In the 1930s, eight American banks financed German rearmament, while Henry Ford helped design tank assembly lines. Hitler, despite his belligerent rhetoric, was tolerated as a useful anti-Communist. Today, Zelensky, under the thumb of Right Sector neoNazis, is cast as NATO's anti-Putin. The continuity is chilling: expediency trumps morality, and fascism is sanitized when it serves strategic ends.

The danger lies not only in selective amnesia but in active revisionism. By elevating Nazi descendants and tolerating neo-Nazi symbolism, the West risks eroding the moral foundations upon which postwar Europe was built. The Holocaust was not merely a tragedy; it was a moral reckoning that shaped international law, human rights, and collective conscience. To dilute its lessons is to invite repetition.

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister, once declared: "A lie told once remains a lie, but a lie told a thousand times becomes the truth." This dictum resonates today as narratives are reshaped to portray Nazi lineage as inconsequential, even respectable. Repetition risks transforming outrage into indifference, and indifference into acceptance.

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

S. M. Hali

Commemoration of Africa Day – 25 May

# Algeria's commitment to strengthening joint African action

Spokesman Report

FM. Attaf reaffirmed Algeria's commitment to Africa under the leadership of the President of the Republic Mr. Abdelmadjid Tebboune: The Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the National Community Abroad, and African Affairs, Ahmed Attaf, reaffirmed on Sunday 24th May 2026, Algeria's commitment, under the leadership of the President of the Republic, Mr. Abdelmadjid Tebboune, to strengthening joint African action, based on the firm conviction that Africa is "the continent of a promising future."

In a speech delivered at the Ministry headquarters on the occasion of the commemoration of Africa Day, 63 anniversary of the creation of African Unity Organization, on 25 May 1963, Mr. Attaf explained that this day constitutes "a milestone for recalling the political, strategic and civilizational project that has united and continues to unite African countries and peoples since the founding of the Organization of African Unity, based on liberation, building national states and strengthening the continent's position as a partner, not a follower, as an initiator, not a recipient, and as a responsible actor on the international stage, with the same rights and obligations as others."

**- New approach to African policy, solidarity and cooperation:**

He emphasized that Algeria's renewed approach to African policy is embodied in the dynamism instilled by the President of the Republic in Algerian diplomacy, particularly concerning its African dimension, whether bilaterally, regionally, or at the multilateral continental level.

He further explained that the number of Algerian embassies accredited to African countries has increased from 29 to 38 following the opening of nine new embassies in recent years, while four African countries have opened embassies in Algeria, and four more are preparing to do the same.



He also noted the development of Air Algérie's air network to the African continent, where the number of destinations has increased from "a handful of destinations to 12 currently, with expectations of reaching 20 destinations in the near future."

Regarding human resource development, Mr. Attaf affirmed that Algeria has increased its annual contribution to the training of young people on the continent from 5,000 to 8,000 scholarships per year, covering higher education, vocational training, and technical

training. **-Huge efforts to achieve continental economic integration:**

On the economic front, the Minister emphasized Algeria's "conviction and rigorous commitment" to efforts to achieve continental economic integration, particularly through major infrastructure projects such as the Trans-Saharan Highway, the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline project, and the feasibility study for extending the Algerian railway network to the Sahel countries.

He also mentioned Algeria's contribution to increasing the volume of intra-African trade, noting that the fourth edition of the Intra-African Trade Fair, hosted by Algeria, resulted in contracts worth a total of US\$23 billion. **- Defending the right of the peoples to self-determination in Western Sahara:**

On the political and security front, Mr. Attaf reiterated Algeria's commitment to the founding principles of joint African action, foremost among them the right of peoples to self-determination, respect for the sovereignty and

territorial integrity of states, non-interference in their internal affairs, and the priority of political and diplomatic solutions.

Regarding the Western Sahara issue, he explained that recent developments in this matter "confirm the validity of what Algeria has demanded and strived for over the past five decades, namely, the organization of direct negotiations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front," welcoming the negotiation process launched at the beginning of this year

under the joint auspices of the United Nations and the United States. He also expressed Algeria's hope that these negotiations will lead to a "just, lasting, and final" solution that guarantees the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination in accordance with UN resolutions.

**-Respecting the security, integrity, sovereignty of African countries:**

Regarding Libya, the Minister reiterated Algeria's support for the efforts of the United Nations to advance the political settlement process, stressing "the need for the various international initiatives at this stage to contribute to supporting UN efforts."

Concerning the situation in the Sahel region, particularly in Mali, Mr. Attaf called on all parties to "prioritize dialogue and a comprehensive and inclusive political settlement that preserves the unity and territorial integrity of Mali."

He also reiterated Algeria's support for the unity and territorial integrity of Somalia, while condemning the opening of a purported embassy in occupied Jerusalem by the so-called "Somalia region". Regarding the situation in Sudan, the Minister called for reason and a sense of responsibility to restore security and peace and preserve Sudan's unity, stressing that ending foreign interference is "an unavoidable requirement."

**-Condemning the crimes in Palestine, supporting Pakistani mediation for the peace in the Gulf:**

Addressing the Palestinian issue, Mr. Attaf condemned "the crimes committed by the occupying Israeli authority in Gaza and the West Bank," considering them part of a project aimed at eliminating the prospect of a Palestinian state.

He also welcomed the steps taken to solidify the ceasefire in the Gulf region, praising the Pakistani mediation efforts and reiterating Algeria's solidarity with the Arab countries affected by the repercussions of the crisis.

## Pakistan works tirelessly to bridge differences between Washington and Tehran: Sardar Masood Khan

Spokesman Report.

ISLAMABAD.: Former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and the United Nations, Sardar Masood Khan on Sunday said that Pakistan has emerged as the central facilitator in ongoing efforts to secure a diplomatic settlement between the United States and Iran, expressing confidence that sustained engagement and pragmatic diplomacy could lead to the successful conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) currently under discussion.



Speaking in a television interview, Ambassador Masood Khan said that the present phase should not be viewed as a tactical pause before renewed hostilities, but rather as a serious diplomatic effort aimed at ending escalation and establishing a framework

for lasting engagement between Washington and Tehran. He noted that Pakistan has been working tirelessly to bridge differences, convey messages between the two capitals, and create the trust necessary for meaningful negotiations.

He remarked that Pakistan's role has gone beyond communication, helping both sides identify common ground and encouraging flexibility at a time when rigid positions could derail the entire process. He described the task as exceptionally challenging given the adversarial relationship that has existed between the United States and Iran for nearly five decades.

## Citizens lauded WASA's Management on Eid

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: In line with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and on the special instructions of Director General Punjab WASA, Tayyab Fareed, WASA Toba Tek Singh remained actively engaged during the Eid holidays to ensure the provision of essential civic services and the prompt resolution of public complaints.

WASA officers and field staff continued their duties throughout the Eid period, working tirelessly to address issues related to drainage, sewerage, sanitation, and other public



service matters. Special teams were constituted under the supervision of Managing Director WASA Toba Tek Singh Kamran Kahlon to monitor different areas and respond swiftly to complaints received from citizens. WASA teams carried out emer-

gency operations at various locations and provided timely relief to the public. Citizens highly appreciated the department's performance and acknowledged its commitment to public service during the Eid holidays.

Several residents recorded their views and expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Director General Punjab WASA Tayyab Fareed and particularly Managing Director WASA Toba Tek Singh Kamran Kahlon for ensuring the prompt resolution of public complaints and maintaining effective civic services.

## The "Uzbek Model" of Rehabilitation: Seven Years of "Mehr"

### Humanitarian Operations

In the modern history of New Uzbekistan, protecting the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of its citizens – wherever in the world they may be – has become not merely a constitutional obligation, but the highest expression of the state's humanity and responsibility. One of the most challenging yet strategically significant tests of this commitment has been the repatriation of compatriots from conflict zones in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan was among the first countries in the world to shift from a policy of "estrangement" to one of "return and compassion," developing a distinctive rehabilitation model in the process.

The first such humanitarian operation was launched exactly seven years ago – on May 30, 2019 – on the personal directive of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. During that mission, 156 Uzbek nationals – predominantly women and children – were brought home from war-ravaged Syria. It was a defining moment: for the first time, the state openly declared its readiness to embrace citizens who had gone astray.

That operation marked the beginning of a series of missions conducted under the collective name "Mehr" (meaning compassion in Uzbek). The core philosophy behind President Mirziyoyev's initiative is that Uzbek citizens who found themselves in conflict zones through misguided choices retain the right to state protection and the opportunity for a new life.

Each mission was unique in its

logistics, risk profile, and the circumstances of those being brought home. The second operation, Mehr-2, carried out in October 2019, was notable for the evacuation of 64 children from Baghdad, Iraq – children whose mothers remained imprisoned abroad and for whom Uzbekistan assumed full guardianship.

In December 2020, despite the sweeping restrictions of the global pandemic, Mehr-3 rescued 98 women and children from the Al-Hol and Roj camps in Syria, where they had been living in dire sanitary conditions. Many of the children bore shrapnel wounds and suffered from serious chronic illnesses. The operation was conducted with technical support from the United States and international organizations.

Mehr-4, carried out in February 2021, focused on Afghanistan, securing the return of 24 citizens caught in the crossfire of that country's protracted war.

The final stage, Mehr-5, was completed in April 2021, bringing home 92 individuals from Syria – 24 women and 68 children, including 7 who were complete orphans. This operation also refined a rapid documentation protocol: birth certificates were issued to children directly at the airport, ensuring they received immediate legal status upon arrival.

In total, the Mehr operations have repatriated more than 530 individuals, approximately 75% of whom are children. The guiding principle throughout has been unequivocal: children cannot be held responsible for the choices of

their parents. Repatriation is far more than a logistical exercise – it is the complex process of transforming yesterday's outcasts into full members of society. The Uzbek model rests on five pillars:

1. Legal Restoration. One hundred percent of repatriates have been provided with official documentation. Every child born in a conflict zone has received a Republic of Uzbekistan birth certificate, granting access to healthcare and education.

2. Economic Empowerment. The state has ensured that no one is left to face hardship alone. Through subsidized credit schemes and vocational training programs, women have found employment and established small businesses within their local communities, achieving economic independence. Repatriates also receive assistance in recovering housing rights lost during their absence, or are provided with subsidized rental accommodation.

3. Inclusive Education. Repatriated children attend mainstream schools – not segregated facilities – and participate in academic competitions and sporting events alongside their peers. To date, approximately 10 repatriates, including women, are enrolled in higher education institutions, and 9 children have become winners or prize-winners in national and regional academic olympiads.

4. Spiritual Guidance. Representatives of the Committee on Religious Affairs, alongside respected theologians and imams of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, conduct preventive counseling sessions, introducing repatriates to the tenets of traditional Hanafi Islam as a counter-narrative to extremist interpretations. More than 90% of returnees have successfully adapted and lead secular lives.

5. Community Engagement Through the Mahalla. Neighbors and community activists within the mahalla (traditional neighborhood institution) play an essential role in helping families reintegrate, preventing stigmatization, and fostering an atmosphere of genuine support. Each family is assigned an experienced mahalla mentor who assists with everyday challenges and monitors the family's wellbeing.

The outcomes of Uzbekistan's repatriation program are recognized by the international community as one of the most successful humanitarian models in the world. The United Nations has officially recommended the "Uzbek model" as a roadmap for other governments. Former UN Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov has repeatedly highlighted it as an example of how a state can effectively combine justice with compassion.

Rehabilitation and reintegration ini-



Timur Akhmedov

Uzbekistan has demonstrated to the international community that repatriation is not a security risk – it is an instrument for strengthening security. International organizations are investing in Uzbekistan today not to remedy a problem, but to scale its success to other regions of the world.

The work with repatriates in Uzbekistan has now moved from a phase of emergency rescue to one of systemic integration. The country operates a well-functioning mechanism that combines state support with community oversight. The state ensures the full legal "erasure" of repatriates' past so that it does not obstruct their future. Where the early focus was on physical health, the emphasis has now shifted to mental wellbeing and civic identity. A repatriate in Uzbekistan in 2026 is a taxpayer, an active participant in mahalla life, and a parent whose children are building their futures within the country.

In contrast to those who choose to close their borders to their own citizens, Uzbekistan's leadership chose the path of responsibility. The country's experience affirms that when a state extends a hand, society grows stronger – and security becomes unshakable.

Uzbekistan's motto in this sphere is clear: "Children cannot be terrorists" – and every Uzbek citizen will always remain under the protection of their homeland.

*The writer is head of department, Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan*

**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

# World Bank Vice President visits Taxila's UNESCO heritage sites, praises cultural legacy

**Commerce Desk**

WAH CANTT: A delegation led by World Bank Vice President Mamta Murthi visited the historic Taxila Museum and several renowned archaeological sites on Sunday, highlighting the global significance of Pakistan's rich cultural and religious heritage.

The delegation was warmly received at the Taxila Museum by Deputy Director SRO Taxila Muhammad Aasim Dogar and Senior Archaeologist Dr. Arslan. During the visit, officials briefed the guests on the museum's extensive collection of Gandharan artifacts, Buddhist relics and the historical importance of Taxila as one of the world's oldest centers of learning and civilization.

Members of the delegation toured various museum galleries



and reviewed ongoing conservation and preservation efforts aimed at protecting the region's invaluable archaeological assets for future generations. The visitors expressed keen interest in the historical exhibits and the measures being taken to safeguard the heritage sites.

As part of the visit, the delegation also explored the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Sirkap and Dharmarajika. Officials briefed them on the historical, cultural and architectural significance of these ancient settlements, which stand as enduring symbols of the Gandharan civilization and the region's Buddhist heritage. The visit underscored the importance of preserving Pakistan's cultural treasures and promoting its historical landmarks as part of the country's rich and diverse civilizational legacy.

## King of fruits

RAWALPINDI: A vendor displaying mangoes on his loading van attraction for customers along Murree Road in the city.



Photo: Online

## Pakistan Furniture Council CEO hails protocols for enhanced China Trade



**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq (Tamgha-I-Imtiaz) Sunday said signing of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade protocols is a positive step that could lead exporters to access the Chinese market more effectively.

Charging here today a board of directors meeting he said likewise, proposals such as a 'green channel' at Khunjerab is poised improving trade facilitation and reducing logistical bottlenecks, Pakistan's effort to encourage long-term procurement arrangements between Chinese SOEs and Pakistan exporters could provide stability and predictability

and aid supply chain integration. He said Pakistan should further strengthen its trade ties with China with greater clarity and policy makers must realise that preferential market access alone is insufficient; improving productivity, upgrading industrial capacity and enhancing export competitiveness are equally essential.

He said if protocols managed effectively, deeper Sino-Pak economic cooperation will boost exports, reduce trade imbalances and create new industrial and investment opportunities. The key challenge will be to complement this opportunity with domestic reforms to improve competitiveness, boost productivity and enable businesses to capitalise on greater access to the Chinese market.

## Pakistan Economy Needs Structural Overhaul for Sustainable Growth: Iftikhar Malik



**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: SAARC chamber of commerce and industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday called for immediate addressing structural issues constraining long term, faster growth prospects without

overheating the economy.

In a statement here today he said economy's size has increased to over \$452bn while per capita income has edged up to \$1,901. Large-scale manufacturing has rebounded while services remain the dominant contributor to growth. Agriculture,

which employs much of the workforce and supports rural incomes, on the other hand, has underperformed. A growth of 2.89pc is hardly robust for a sector seen as the economy's backbone. He said per capita income has increased in dollar terms. But much of the population continues to struggle with a high cost of living, stagnant wages and declining purchasing power. Without sustained reforms in productivity, education, energy, exports and governance, modest recoveries will continue to alternate with crises. The challenge is not merely to increase growth figures, but to change the quality of growth too.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said in coming budget government must focus on boosting growth and exports by offering a basket of unprecedented package incentives to private sector and ease of doing business. He said only prudent consistent economic policies can drive the country out of crisis by taking all stakeholders into confidence on the pattern of developed countries. He said all state owned enterprises incurring trillions of rupees annual loss to national kitty must be privatised on top priority through transparent process.

## Saif ur Rehman Highlights Economic Potential for Pakistani Ports

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman, Saif Ur Rehman, Sunday said that the ongoing conflict in Middle East has created a significant opportunity for Pakistan's ports and logistics sector.

Talking here today to a delegation of students of Murasaki Japanese Language Centre led by its Chief Executive Officer Usman Akhtar he surge in port traffic, driven by shifting trade routes and increased



regional demand, could provide a substan-

tial economic boost if the government acts swiftly to address longstanding challenges in logistics and governance. He further stated the current situation presents a rare opportunity to transform Pakistan into a regional trade and transit hub. If policymakers fast-track reforms and ensure effective governance, the country can capitalize on rising port activity, generate employment, increase revenue, and strengthen overall economic resilience in the years ahead.

## Punjab's Digital Governance Wins International Acclaim at WSIS Awards



**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Punjab's digital governance, led by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has garnered international acclaim. The Punjab Safe Cities Authority's (PSCA) 'Mera Pyara' (Virtual Center for Child Safety) was honored as a Champion Project at the WSIS Prize 2026, a United Nations initiative recognizing digital innovation. This marks a significant achievement for Pakistan, as both 'Mera Pyara' and the PSCA's Virtual Women Police Station were shortlisted for the prestigious awards. 'Mera Pyara', a digital platform designed to reunite missing children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities with their families, has proven highly effective. Since its incep-

tion, it has managed over 145,000 child-related cases, including more than 54,000 missing children, successfully reuniting over 77,000 children. The platform also provides crucial assistance in cases of child exploitation and online harassment. The WSIS Awards are globally recognized for celebrating excellence in digital governance and technology's social impact. This international recognition reflects confidence in Chief Minister Sharif's technology-driven governance model and showcases Pakistan's progressive and technologically advanced image. The PSCA is committed to advancing public services, child protection, and digital governance through innovative solutions for citizens throughout Punjab.

## Pakistan's Green Potential: Biogas, Biofertilizers, and Drip Irrigation to Unlock Growth



**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Convener federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry regional committee on food shahid Imran Sunday said agriculture can turn waste into value through biogas, biofertilizer, and drip irrigation, while mangrove restoration and climate-smart crops build resilience and carbon assets.

Talking here today to a delegation of progressive farmers led Maj Retd Muhammad Raza Arain he said Green financing—sovereign sustainability bonds, diaspora green sukuk, and results-based grants—can de-risk investment. Above all, credible policy—stable tariffs, transparent auctions, and streamlined permits—will unlock capital and confidence, translating Pakistan's natural advantages into inclusive, low-carbon growth. Unlocking green potential in Pakistan demands bold policy, smart finance, and local innovation working in sync he added. Pakistan has abundant solar and wind corridors, vast agricultural residues, and a young workforce—yet energy insecurity and climate shocks persist. The fastest win is scaling distributed solar: rooftop and agrivoltaics can cut losses, free grid capacity, and stabilize farm incomes. Pairing net metering with concessional microloans and local assembly would multiply adoption while creating jobs.

# 184,000 Heroes, One Clean Punjab

Every Eid-ul-Adha, Pakistan transforms. Streets fill with families, cattle markets come alive for days before the festival and the air carries the particular energy of a celebration observed by tens of millions of people at once. Then comes the aftermath, and with it, one of the most demanding tests any government faces: clearing an enormous volume of sacrificial waste before it becomes a public health crisis.

This year in Punjab, that test was met with unusual force.

Over 72 continuous hours spanning the Eid holidays, more than 184,000 sanitation workers fanned out across the province, through urban neighborhoods and rural communities, along market streets and outside mosques, into areas that larger operations often miss. Temperatures hovered around 45 degrees Celsius. The workers stayed anyway.

By the time the campaign concluded, the Punjab government had collected and disposed of more than 376,000 tonnes of animal waste and refuse. The numbers are almost difficult to picture: 290 cattle markets cleared, 1,278 collective slaughter sites serviced, thousands of Eid grounds and mosques cleaned and washed. More than 40,000 machinery units were deployed alongside vehicle and loader rickshaw fleets. It was, by

most measures, one of the largest coordinated sanitation operations the country has seen.

"Suthra Punjab" is the name the provincial government gave to the initiative, and the phrase points to something larger than a single holiday campaign.

Under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the administration has invested heavily in the idea that governance can be modernized: that digital tools, real-time data and systematic accountability can change what is possible in public-service delivery. The Eid operation was, in many ways, a stress test of that philosophy.

At the center of the effort was a digital monitoring dashboard that tracked the campaign's progress across the province in real time. Rather than relying on manual reports that trickled upward through layers of bureaucracy, supervisors and administrators could see where waste collection was falling behind, where resources needed to be redirected and where emerging problems required immediate attention. More than 74,000 users fed operational data into the system, generating over a terabyte of information over the course of

the campaign. In selected areas, drone surveillance offered an additional layer of oversight, a tool more commonly associated with tech hubs than with sanitation drives in South Asia.

Citizens, too, were drawn into the operation. More than 41,000 people used the provincial helpline and digital applications to report concerns or seek assistance, a figure that suggests something real about public trust in the system. When ordinary people believe that calling a helpline will produce a result, they call.

The environmental dimension of the campaign was also notable. Twelve million biodegradable waste bags were distributed free of charge, nudging citizens toward responsible disposal. Large quantities of lime, disinfectants and rose water were used to manage hygiene and odor across collection points, practical measures that made a direct difference to comfort and health during the festival. The Punjab government has signaled further ambitions beyond the immediate cleanup: waste-to-energy projects and biogas generation programmes are among the longer-term investments being pursued.

Perhaps the most human gesture of

the entire operation came at the end. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif announced a special cash reward of Rs10,000 for each sanitation worker, on top of their regular salaries. It was an acknowledgment of something that civic operations tend to obscure, that behind every clean street is a person who made it so, often without recognition, often in punishing conditions.

Sanitation workers occupy a peculiar place in public life. Their labor is noticed most when it is absent. The smell of uncollected waste, the flies around a neglected market, the stained ground outside a slaughter site — these register. The person who prevented those things rarely does. A government that pauses to name them and to compensate them is doing something that matters beyond the transaction.

Punjab's Eid campaign will not be remembered as a miracle. It was the product of planning, coordination and technology brought to bear on a predictable annual challenge. But in a south asian region where such challenges routinely go unmet, competent execution is its own form of achievement and the people working in the heat deserve to be the headline.

*(The writer is a Lahore-based public policy analyst and can be reached at qudratu@gmail.com)*



Analysis

Qudrat Ullah

## GC University Faisalabad Secures Spot in HEC Women's Hockey Final



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The first semi-final of the All Pakistan Higher Education Commission (HEC) Inter-University Women's Hockey Championship 2025-2026 was played between Government College University Faisalabad and Superior University Lahore.

GC University won the semi-final by 2 goals to 1 after a thrilling contest and made it to the final. Organizing Secretary Dr. Saeed Javed The special guest of this match was Assistant Director Sports HEC Muhammad Asif, who was introduced to both the teams and a group photo was taken.

On this occasion, Organizing Secretary Director Sports GC University Dr. Saeed Javed was also present. A large number of female spectators were present in the stadium to watch the match. The final match of this championship will be played between GC University Faisalabad and Punjab University Lahore tomorrow, Monday.

# The Lasting Scars: Strategies to Combat Child Abuse Worldwide

Zunaira Riaz

Protecting yourself and others from abuse and rape involves several key strategies. It's important to trust your instincts and remove yourself from any situation that feels unsafe. Setting clear boundaries and communicating them assertively is crucial. Learning self-defense techniques can also build confidence and provide practical skills.

For children, open communication is vital. Talk to them about body safety, consent, and the difference between safe and unsafe touches. Teach them that they have the right to say no to any touch they don't like, even from someone they know. Encourage them to tell a trusted adult if something makes them feel uncomfortable or scared. Additionally, educating them about online safety is essential, as much abuse can happen through digital platforms. Knowing who to contact for help, like trusted family members, teachers, or specific helplines, is also empowering. The global situation regarding child abuse and sexual violence is complex and varies significantly by region. Many countries face challenges with underreporting, inadequate legal frameworks, and insufficient resources for prevention and support

services. International organizations and NGOs work to address these issues through advocacy, education, and direct intervention.

In Pakistan like many other nations, child abuse and sexual violence are serious concerns. Efforts are being made to raise awareness, strengthen laws, and improve the response system for survivors. However, societal factors, economic challenges, and access to justice can present significant obstacles. There are various local organizations and government initiatives working to combat these issues. The reasons behind child abuse and sexual violence are multifaceted and deeply rooted in societal, psychological, and systemic factors. Power imbalances often play a significant role, where perpetrators exploit their position of authority or influence over vulnerable individuals. Cultural norms that may silence victims, stigmatize survivors, or normalize certain harmful behaviors can also contribute to the problem.

Psychological factors in perpetrators can include a lack of empathy, personality disorders, or a history of experiencing or witnessing abuse themselves, though this is not an excuse for their actions. Systemic failures, such as a lack of robust child protection services, inadequate law enforcement response, or legal loopholes, can allow abuse to continue

unchecked. Poverty and displacement can also increase vulnerability.

"Second" open communication is key. Create an environment where children feel safe to talk about anything, without fear of judgment or dismissal. Encourage them to share their feelings and experiences, and listen attentively when they do. Let them know that if something ever happens that makes them feel bad, they should tell a trusted adult immediately, and that you will believe them and help them. It's important to identify a few trusted adults in their lives they can turn to.

"Third" educate them about the difference between safe and unsafe secrets. A secret that makes them feel scared, confused, or dirty is not a secret they should keep. Teach them that telling an adult about something unsafe is not tattling; it's being brave and responsible.

Fourth, as they get older, conversations can evolve to include consent in relationships, recognizing and avoiding risky situations, and understanding the impact of their online activities. Teaching them about healthy relationships and respecting others' boundaries is also part of this broader education. It's crucial for adults to be informed and vigilant. This means recognizing the signs of abuse, knowing where to seek help, and actively creating safe environments for children

in all aspects of their lives. It's really important for parents to talk to each other about how they want to keep an eye on their kids' social lives, like who they hang out with and their friends. They need to figure out how much they trust their kids and set some clear rules about meeting people and going places. It's also good to decide how much they want to know about their child's friends and what they're up to. Plus, they should agree on how much they'll watch over their kids, depending on how old they are and what they're doing. Most importantly, they should have a way to talk about and deal with any worries they have about their child's friends or activities. This way, they can be on the same page and parent consistently. When it comes to keeping children safe, it's not just about friends and meetups; it extends to family members and relatives too. Parents need to have open conversations about how they want to monitor their children's interactions with everyone, including extended family. This involves establishing trust and clear boundaries, not just with external friends, but also within the family circle. They should decide how much information they want to share and receive regarding their child's relationships with relatives, and what level of supervision is appropriate. It's crucial for parents to discuss

potential risks that might exist even within family settings and to have a plan for addressing any concerns that arise. This could involve setting boundaries on unsupervised time with certain relatives or ensuring that children know they can always talk to their parents if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe, regardless of who is involved. By extending these safety discussions to include family and relatives, parents can create a more comprehensive network of protection for their children, ensuring their well-being in all social interactions.

Schools and educational institutions craft their safety rules with a deep understanding of the vulnerabilities children face. They weave a tapestry of protection through comprehensive child protection policies, ensuring every staff member is a vigilant guardian, trained to recognize the faintest signs of distress or harm and equipped with clear, decisive action plans. Beyond just rules, they foster a culture of respect and safety through codes of conduct that actively combat bullying and harassment, creating an environment where every student feels valued and secure. Their visitor policies act as a firm gatekeeper, ensuring that only trusted individuals can access the school grounds, adding another layer of security. Constant supervision, from the classroom to the playground,

is meticulously planned, providing a watchful presence throughout the school day. Furthermore, schools empower students with knowledge, integrating vital lessons on personal safety, digital citizenship, and healthy relationships, equipping them with the tools to navigate risks and seek help. And crucially, they establish accessible and confidential reporting systems, assuring students and parents that their concerns will be heard and addressed with the utmost seriousness and care. Child protection and controlling abuse situations in Pakistan involve a multi-faceted approach. Key strategies include strengthening legal frameworks to ensure stricter enforcement of laws against child abuse and exploitation, and increasing public awareness campaigns to educate communities about children's rights and the signs of abuse. Establishing and supporting child protection services, such as helplines and shelters, is also crucial for providing immediate assistance to victims. Moreover, integrating child protection education into school curricula and training teachers and other professionals who work with children can help create safer environments. Empowering communities to report abuse and encouraging a culture where children feel safe to speak up are vital steps in controlling this situation.

## Yaum e Takbeer: Remembering...

Continued from Page 4

As the nation of Pakistan celebrates Yaum e Takbeer on the twenty-eighth of May, the pride that swells in every heart is not just justified; it is the only rational, logical, and emotional response to a quarter-century of proven, undeniable national security. The nuclear assets of Pakistan are not mere weapons of mass destruction; they are the most cost-effective, reliable, and indispensable insurance policy ever purchased by a developing nation facing an existential threat.

They serve as an impenetrable shield against any future threat, whether it is a massive conventional invasion across the international border, a cross-border surgical strike designed to humiliate, a naval blockade of Karachi, or even a nuclear first strike by an adversary. The shield is not static; it is a living, breathing, evolving system of deterrence. Every new Indian capability, whether it is a new ballistic missile, a new warship, or a new doctrine of war, is met with a determined Pakistani counter-capability. The logic is

cold, mathematical, precise, and absolute: as long as Pakistan possesses a secure, survivable, and operationally ready second-strike nuclear capability, no enemy, no combination of enemies, can ever contemplate the destruction or dismemberment of the Pakistani state. This shield has protected Pakistan during the worst periods of terrorism, when the state was attacked from within and from across the borders by non-state actors. It shielded the country during the military standoffs of 1999 (the Kargil conflict), 2001-2002 (the ten-month long Operation Parakram, which saw the largest concentration of Indian troops on the border since 1971), and 2019 (Operation Swift Retort, following the Pulwama attack). In each and every instance, the nuclear bomb was the unspoken, invisible, but absolutely present umpire that stopped the game before it could become a genocide. The day is a powerful reminder that the survival of the Pakistani nation against all odds—against a larger, richer, and more populous neighbor, against the hostility of many global

powers, against the machinations of international non-proliferation regimes—is not a miracle, nor is it luck. It is the direct, measurable, and undeniable result of deliberate, painful, brilliant, and sacrifice-laden strategic planning and execution. From the political resolve of Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, to the scientific genius of Dr. A. Q. Khan and Dr. Samar Mubarakmand, to the tactical brilliance of the crew of PNS Hangor, and to the sweat and blood of the countless workers in the Chagai Hills and the Kahuta laboratories, the story of Pakistan's defense is a story of national unity, unwavering faith, and a refusal to be subjugated. We feel proud of it—unapologetically, eternally, and with a new, invigorated passion this year—because the nuclear bomb is the ultimate, unanswerable expression of the Pakistani national will to survive, to thrive, and to remain free. On Yaum e Takbeer, we remember the day that survival was secured forever, and we vow to keep that shield strong, for ourselves and for the generations of Pakistanis yet to come.

## Revising History: The West's...

Continued from Page 4

Critics argue that guilt cannot be inherited, and they are right. Descendants should not be judged for the sins of their forebears. But the issue here is not inherited guilt—it is inherited power. When individuals with Nazi ancestry ascend to positions of influence, the symbolism matters. It signals a willingness to overlook history's darkest chapters for expediency. It normalizes what should remain taboo.

The implications extend beyond Europe. In Canada, Chrystia Freeland's lineage has been scrutinized, yet her role as envoy to Ukraine underscores how democracies selectively mute uncomfortable truths. In Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili's ancestry is similarly overlooked. The message is clear: when strategic interests demand, history can be rewritten, and moral lines blurred.

This trend undermines the West's credibility in championing human rights. How can Europe lecture others on morality while tolerating neo-Nazi

symbolism within its own ranks? How can NATO claim to defend democracy while aligning with forces that glorify fascist collaborators? The hypocrisy erodes the very values the West claims to uphold.

Russia has seized upon these contradictions to bolster its narrative of fighting neoNazism in Ukraine. While Moscow's propaganda is self-serving, it gains traction precisely because the West's actions lend it plausibility. By failing to confront neo-Nazi symbolism, the West hands Russia a potent rhetorical weapon.

The stakes are high. If Nazism is normalized in strategic discourse, the moral compass of international politics will be damaged. The lessons of the 20th century—hardwon through blood and sacrifice—risk being forgotten. The Holocaust's warning, "Never Again," must not be reduced to a hollow slogan.

The path forward requires courage. Western leaders must confront uncomfortable truths, reject neo-Nazi symbolism, and reaffirm the moral foundations of democracy. Descend-

ants of Nazi officials can serve in public life, but their lineage must be acknowledged with transparency, not concealed or sanitized. Zelensky must be held accountable for gestures that glorify fascist collaborators, no matter how expedient they may seem.

History is not a tool to be bent at will. It is a mirror that reflects humanity's triumphs and tragedies. To distort it for gain is to betray the values that distinguish democracy from tyranny. The West must choose: remain faithful to its moral heritage, or sacrifice principle on the altar of expediency.

In the end, Goebbels' dictum warns us of the peril of repeated lies. If the normalization of Nazism is allowed to echo unchecked, it may indeed become "truth" in the public mind. And when lies become truth, history repeats itself—not as tragedy alone, but as catastrophe.

*The writer is a retired Group Captain of PAF. He is a columnist, analyst and TV talk show host, who has authored six books on current affairs, including three on China*

# Trump Ensured the Downfall of America as a Superpower

Continued from Page 4

Beyond the Middle East, broader structural changes are reshaping the international system. Organizations such as BRICS continue to expand their influence. More countries are conducting trade in local currencies, exploring alternative payment mechanisms, and seeking ways to reduce dependence on the dollar-based financial system. While the U.S. dollar remains the world's dominant reserve currency, the trend toward diversification is unmistakable which will significantly reduce Washington's ability

to use sanctions as a tool of geopolitical influence.

The same dynamic can be seen in security affairs. NATO remains one of the world's most powerful alliances, yet discussions within Europe about independent defense capabilities continue to grow. Many governments increasingly recognize the need for greater strategic self-reliance. Ironically, objectives that Russia pursued unsuccessfully for decades through pressure and confrontation may now be advancing indirectly through agreements within the Western alliance itself.

Meanwhile, countries across the Western Hemisphere are broadening their diplomatic and economic options. Canada, Mexico, and several Latin American states increasingly pursue diversified relationships with Europe, Asia, and emerging economies which would ensure that the United States influence is no longer synonymous with unquestioned leadership.

Perhaps the most revealing aspect of this transformation was the lack of support among Muslim countries for signing the Abraham Accords without a two-state solution to resolve the Palestinian issue, despite the U.S. demand that such recognition of Israel be a precondition for a peace agreement with Iran. Instead, governments prioritized immediate national interests, energy security, economic stability, and regional de-escalation. In doing so, they demonstrated that even close partners are increasingly willing to pursue independent policies when vital strategic interests are at stake.

If historians eventually identify the moment when American supremacy entered irreversible

decline, they may trace it not to a military defeat at the hands of a rival superpower, but to a series of self-inflicted strategic miscalculations that undermined the very foundations of U.S. influence.

Through confrontational tariff policies, disputes with allies, pressure campaigns against partners, inconsistent diplomacy, and the mishandling of the Iran crisis, President Donald Trump accelerated trends that were already weakening American leadership.

The Strait of Hormuz did not create this transformation; it merely exposed it. The sight

of allies and partners bypassing Washington to engage directly with Tehran symbolized a deeper reality: confidence in American judgment, predictability, and leadership had eroded.

In attempting to project unrivaled power, Washington instead encouraged nations to seek alternatives, diversify partnerships, and pursue independent paths. The ultimate irony may be that the greatest challenge to American primacy did not come from Beijing, Moscow, or Tehran, but from policies that weakened the trust, alliances, and international

goodwill upon which American power was built.

What emerged from this crisis was not merely a dispute over a waterway, but a powerful reminder that even the strongest empires can hasten their own decline when hubris replaces strategy and coercion replaces consensus.

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

## Beautiful view of PM House

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of full blooming seasonal flowers on a green belt in front of Prime Minister Secretariat, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# EU Foreign Policy Chief Kaja Kallas to visit Pakistan Today

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Kaja Kallas, will undertake an official visit to Pakistan on June 1 (today) at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, the Foreign Office announced on Sunday.

According to the Foreign Office spokesperson, Kallas's visit underscores the growing engagement between Pakistan and the European Union and reflects the importance both sides attach to strengthening bilateral cooperation.

During the visit, Ishaq Dar and Kaja Kallas will jointly co-chair the 8th Pakistan-European Union Strategic Dialogue, the highest-level



institutional forum between Pakistan and the European Union. The dialogue serves as a structured platform through which both sides discuss key political, economic, security and international issues of mutual interest.

In addition to the strategic dialogue, the EU foreign policy chief is scheduled to meet Pakistan's top leadership, including President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The Foreign Office stated that Pakistan places great

importance on its long-standing and comprehensive partnership with the European Union, which is founded on shared values, strong economic cooperation and a common commitment to multilateralism.

The spokesperson noted that the visit demonstrates the continuity and increasing momentum of high-level political exchanges between Pakistan and the EU. It also highlights the shared determination of both sides to further deepen and broaden cooperation across multiple sectors.

Pakistan expressed confidence that Kaja Kallas's visit will contribute to strengthening bilateral relations, enhancing political dialogue, expanding economic ties and promoting closer coordination on regional and international issues.

The visit is expected to provide an opportunity for both sides to review the progress of ongoing cooperation and explore new avenues for partnership under the broader Pakistan-European Union framework.

# Govt cuts annual tax target by Rs1.1 trillion after revenue shortfall

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has revised its annual revenue target downward for a second time for the fiscal year after falling short of collection goals. According to official figures and sources familiar with ongoing discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has reduced its annual tax collection target to Rs13.005 trillion from a previously revised goal of Rs13.979 trillion.

The target was originally set at Rs14.131 trillion, meaning it has now



been cut by Rs1.126 trillion.

Sources said the FBR recorded a shortfall of Rs866 billion against the previously revised target during the first 11 months of the fiscal year.

Following the latest adjustment, however, the gap has narrowed to around Rs25 billion, bringing the

authority closer to achieving the updated goal.

Data for the July-May period showed that income tax remained the largest source of revenue, contributing Rs5.602 trillion.

Sales tax collections stood at Rs4.215 trillion, while revenue from Federal Excise Duty exceeded Rs744 billion.

Customs duties generated approximately Rs1.220 trillion during the same period.

The FBR also issued tax refunds worth Rs550 billion in the first 11 months of the fiscal year, part of efforts to clear pending claims and improve

liquidity for businesses.

In May alone, the tax authority collected Rs966 billion.

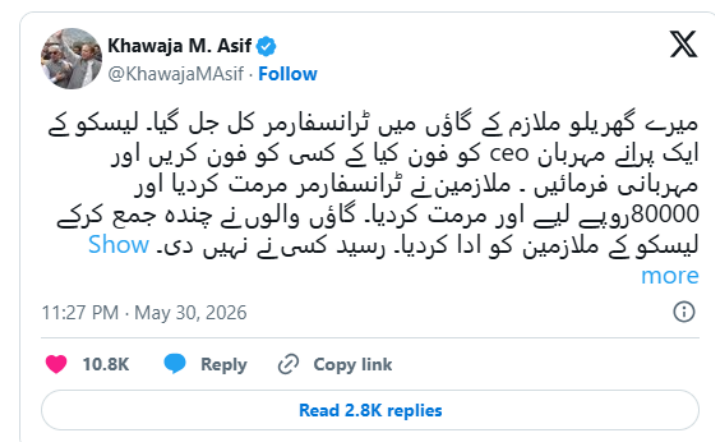
Income tax contributed Rs459 billion, while sales tax receipts exceeded Rs386 billion.

Federal Excise Duty generated Rs 72 billion, and customs duties brought in nearly Rs 100 billion during the month.

More than Rs50 billion in refunds were issued in May, according to the figures.

The revised revenue target is thought to feature in ongoing consultations between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund.

# Defence Minister Kh Asif lifts the lid on culture of graft in LESCO



### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Corruption has become so entrenched in the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) that its employees did not even spare the ex-minister for water and power,

Khawaja Asif, who is presently serving as the Minister of Defence in Prime Minister Shehbaz's Sharif's cabinet.

Taking to X, a social media platform, Asif narrated how he asked a LESCO CEO to send the company's employees to the village of one of his servants to

repair a transformer, which had been burnt.

He said that the LESCO employees received Rs80,000 for the repair of the transformer, and did not give any receipt. "This is the state of affairs that the company employees showed

no regard even for me, who was the minister of water and power, and is presently the country's defence minister," he said in his tweet, and wondered that if these employees could hoodwink him, then what would be their attitude towards a common man.



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# Serbian president supports Pakistan's claim of decimating India's defence system



### News Desk

The world has now begun to acknowledge that India suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of Pakistan in Marka-e-Haq, reported the 24NewsHD TV channel on Sunday.

In a recent interview, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, as an impartial observer and on the basis of available data, has vindicated Pakistan's claim that it decimated India's S-400 defence system during last year's military confrontation.

The president has said that the

weapons manufactured by China played a key role during the confrontation as they successfully targeted the S-400 defence system.

Vučić has said that it could be seen from Chinese satellites at which place India's radar system was targeted and that available reports belie India's contradiction.

Analysts here in the country have said that statements like these are proof that the world has rejected Indian propaganda that it had an upper hand over Pakistan during the war.

# Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's Gilgit-Baltistan visit postponed after PIA flight scheduling mix-up



### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's planned visit to Gilgit-Baltistan was postponed due to an alleged administrative failure by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) stated that Bilawal and Aseefa Bhutto Zardari could not travel to Skardu because PIA, without prior notification to the party, rescheduled their flight. The leaders arrived at the airport to find the flight had already departed. Consequently, all scheduled events for the day in Gilgit-Balti-

stan were canceled, causing considerable inconvenience to party workers, organizers, and local officials who had made arrangements for the visit.

The PPP Gilgit-Baltistan President, Amjad Advocate, severely criticized PIA's mismanagement and incompetence, highlighting that thousands of supporters had gathered in Skardu. He alleged that PIA did not inform the accompanying team about the new schedule, leading to the visit's disruption. Advocate urged PIA to improve coordination and communication to prevent future incidents.

# Governor Kundi holds meetings with political, student delegations; expresses condolences



### Bureau Report

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, : Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi met with political representatives, including JUI leader Haji Nisar Ahmad Bettani, to discuss law and order, political developments, and provincial rights. He also met with a delegation from the Bettani Students Society of Gomal University, accompanied by youth organization leaders, to address educational issues, particularly focusing on improving opportunities for young people and promoting girls' education. Governor Kundi emphasized education's vital

role in societal progress and assured his support for student concerns. Additionally, he extended his condolences to Pakistan Muslim League leader Zeeshan Raj on the passing of his mother.

Separately, Governor Kundi expressed deep sorrow over the death of the mother of Pakistan Muslim League leader Zeeshan Raj of Dera Ismail Khan. In a condolence message, he prayed for the departed soul to be granted a high place in Jannah and extended his sympathies to the bereaved family, praying for their patience and strength during this difficult time.