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# PM chairs review meeting on power sector reforms, pushes comprehensive RE strategy

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday chaired a high-level review meeting on reform measures in the power sector, directing authorities to formulate a comprehensive strategy to meet future energy needs through renewable sources.

Chairing the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, the prime minister emphasized that increased electricity generation from hydropower, solar energy, biogas and other renewable resources would help reduce production costs and positively impact economic growth. He also called for expediting steps to reduce reliance on imported fuels, a news release said.

leniency be shown towards individuals involved in electricity theft. He further ordered strict departmental action against power distribution companies found violating the Economic Merit Order in recent days.

He instructed officials to accelerate the implementation of smart meter installation on transformers in areas with high electricity theft and to fast-track measures for promoting a competitive electricity market in the country. The prime minister also directed authorities to expedite work on supplying 400 megawatts of electricity to the private sector in the first phase under the wheeling regime.

During the briefing, participants were informed that electricity theft, non-payment, and other losses in distribution companies had significantly decreased.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs progress review meeting on reforms in power sector.

# US threatens 'devastating' response to any Iran attack on shipping

MAHARA ZAMAN



NEW YORK: The United States is "not looking for a fight" over the Strait of Hormuz, and its ceasefire with Iran still holds, but any attack on commercial shipping will be met with a "devastating" response, the Pentagon chief said on Tuesday. The warning from Pete Hegseth came on the second day of a US effort, dubbed 'Project Freedom', to facilitate the transit of commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran had closed in response to the US-Israeli war on the Islamic republic. "We're not looking for a fight. But Iran also cannot be allowed to block innocent countries and their goods from an international waterway," Hegseth told reporters. "If you attack American troops or innocent commercial shipping, you will face overwhelming and devastating American firepower." The Pentagon chief added that Washington is promising security for commercial vessels with a "red, white and blue dome" over the Strait of Hormuz.

# Corps Commanders reject Taliban's propaganda; shows resolve to decisively dismantle terrorist networks

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HI, COAS & CDF, presided over the 275th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi. The Forum paid rich tribute to the Shuhada of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies, and innocent civilians who laid down their lives in defence of the motherland. Paying profound tribute to their unmatched sacrifices, the Forum reaffirmed that the enduring legacy of the martyrs continues to serve as the bedrock of Pakistan's national security, unity, and resilience. The COAS & CDF expressed satisfaction over the high standards of operational preparedness, professionalism, and combat readiness of the Pakistan Armed Forces. He commended commanders and formations for their unwavering commitment, vigilance, and success in ongoing intelligence-based counter-terrorism operations across the country. The Forum undertook a comprehensive review of the prevailing internal and external security environment. The Forum resolved to maintain current operational tempo to decisively dismantle terrorist networks, disrupt their support infrastructure, and deny them any operational space within Pakistan. The Forum acknowledged continued degradation of terrorists and their support infrastructure through operation Ghazal lil Haq. It noted that the irrational and perverted policy of Afghan Taliban regime to provide safe havens to Khawarij and other terrorist organisations, with total disregard to interests of Afghan people.

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# Saudi Arabia urges restraint, support for Pakistani mediation toward US-Iran settlement

PEAK POINT



SAUDI ARABIA: Saudi Arabia called on Tuesday for exercising restraint and supporting Pakistani-led mediation efforts to reach a political settlement between Iran and the US amid ongoing regional tensions. Saudi Arabia "calls for de-escalation, restraint, and support for Pakistani mediation and diplomatic efforts to reach a political solution that prevents the region from sliding into further tension and instability."

which would not serve the interests of the region and the world," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement on X. Expressing concern regarding the "current military escalation in the region," the ministry called for restoring maritime navigation in the Strait of Hormuz to its pre-war state. Riyadh "calls for ensuring the safe and secure passage of vessels without restriction," it added. The statement came as the situation escalated in the Gulf on Monday, with the United Arab Emirates accusing Iran of launching 15 missiles and four drones on its territory, and Tehran claiming it fired warning shots after US.

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# Pakistan's trade deficit tops \$4bn in April 2026

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's trade deficit crossed \$4 billion in April 2026, the highest in 46 months, amid an increase in imports, data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed on Tuesday. The country's trade deficit stood at \$4.07 billion in April, up nearly 4% against \$3.92 billion recorded in the same period the previous year. Pakistan's exports clocked in at \$2.48 billion in April 2026, registering an increase of 14% as compared to \$2.17 billion in April 2025. On the other hand, imports stood at \$6.55 billion in April 2026.

# Fire at UAE's Fujairah port not a planned Iranian attack, says Iranian military official

PEAK POINT

IRAN: An unnamed Iranian military official says the fire at Fujairah port was not a planned Iranian attack and instead shifted the blame to the United States "military adventurism", according to Al Jazeera.

"The Islamic Republic had no pre-planned programme to attack the mentioned oil facilities, and what happened was the result of US military adventurism aimed at creating a passage for the illegal transit of ships through the restricted waterways of the Strait of Hormuz," the official told Iran's IRIB news agency.

"The US military must be held accountable for this. US officials must put an end to the improper practice of using force in the diplomatic process and

stop military adventurism in this sensitive oil region,



which affects the economies of countries around the world."

Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said in a social media post on Tuesday that the security of shipping and energy transit had been threatened by breaches of the four-week-old ceasefire by the US and its allies.

"The new equation of the Strait of Hormuz is in the process of being solidi-

fied. The security of shipping and energy transit has

been jeopardised by the United States and its allies through the violation of the ceasefire and the imposition of a blockade," the X post read.

"We know well that the continuation of the current situation is unbearable for the United States, while we have not even begun yet," he said. The strait is a vital thoroughfare for global supplies of oil, fertiliser and other commodities that

have been virtually closed since the US and Israel began attacks on Iran on February 28, causing price rises around the world.

Several merchant ships in the Gulf reported explosions or fires on Monday, and an oil port in the United Arab Emirates, which hosts a large US military base, was set ablaze by Iranian missiles.

New US trade route in Hormuz "rocky, shallow, and risky"

The US-led Joint Maritime Information Center is advising stranded ships to cross the Hormuz Strait in Oman's waters saying it set up an "enhanced security area", according to Al Jazeera.

However, the semi-official Fars news agency reported on Tuesday two commercial vessels attempting to traverse the sea route are now stuck.

# Prominent cleric Muhammad Idrees gunned down in KP's Charsadda

PEAK POINT

CHARSADDA: Renowned cleric and former Jamiat Ulema-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) MPA Maulana Muhammad Idrees was killed on Tuesday after unidentified assailants opened fire on him, police said. Police Personal Relations Officer Saifulah told Dawn that Idrees left for Darul Uloom Nounmania from his home in Tangarai. He said that shortly before he arrived at his destination, armed assailants fired at the vehicle in the Tariqabad Utmanzai area. He said that two officials were also injured in the incident, adding that police had obtained CCTV footage of the incident. The cleric's body was subsequently shifted to the District Headquarter Hospital. The deceased's father-in-law, Maulana Hassan Jan, who had defeated Awami National Party (ANP) leader Abdul Wali Khan in his native Charsadda constituency, was also gunned down by the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) for opposing armed struggle.



# SPORTS



## All PFF stakeholders united for stability in Pakistan football

## Men's U18 Asia Cup Hockey schedule unveiled, Pakistan placed in group B



**PEAK POINT** Khokhar, V.P PFF Naveed Aslam Lodi, and PFF EXCO members Raja Amer Khan, Mohsin Ali Chaudhry and Director PFF Legal Ali Akram. In front of all, the message of PFF President Mr. Syed Mohsen Gilani was shared during the press conference. In his message, PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani said: "The international football community has warmly welcomed Pakistan and shown strong confidence in our vision. Pakistan is increasingly being recognised as a positive and unifying force through football. Our engagements at the FIFA Congress have opened new doors for cooperation, development, and opportunity for our players, coaches, and officials." He added: "Pakistan's new global identity as 'peacemakers' has significantly enhanced the country's soft image worldwide; it has, in fact, strengthened our engagements with renowned and established footballing nations." Chief Operating Officer of PFF, Shahid Niaz Khokhar, said: "We have received clear guidance from both FIFA and the AFC leadership, emphasising the importance of stability in Pakistan football. In response, all stakeholders are united in their commitment to strengthening the game across the country. Together, we are dedicated to promoting, developing, and elevating schools, as well as players and Pakistan football to new heights, ensuring sustainable growth and a brighter future for the sport." Vice President of PFF Mr. Zaka Ullah said: "International football authorities, along with all domestic stakeholders, including PFF forums, the football community, government sports bodies, and the corporate sector, strongly desire stability within the PFF." Zaka said and added: "No adventure will be allowed to destabilize PFF." "Through our discussions with fellow Member Associations (Federations), we have consistently emphasised the need for exchange programmes, encompassing youth, women and promoting schools, as well as players and Pakistan football to new heights, coaches.



PEAK POINT

**ISLAMABAD:** The Asian Hockey Federation has officially approved the schedule for the Men's Under-18 Asia Cup 2026, which will take place in Japan from May 29 to June 6. According to officials, the tournament will feature top junior teams from across Asia competing for the title. Matches will be played in the Japanese city of Kakamigahara. Teams have been divided into two groups. Group A includes India, South Korea, host Japan, Chinese Taipei, and Kazakhstan. Group B consists of Pakistan, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and China. Pakistan national under-18 field hockey team will begin its campaign on May 30 against China. The team will then face Malaysia in May 31 and Bangladesh on June 3 in the group stage. The semi-finals are scheduled for June 5, while the final of the tournament will be played on June 6.

## Pakistan to host women's team event this year

## First step in Europe, a long road ahead for Pakistan's U-16 footballers

**PEAK POINT** ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) President Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi said Monday that tennis is helping build Pakistan's soft image globally, adding that the country will host a women's team event for the first time. "Pakistan is a country that promotes peace and friendship," Qureshi told a press conference here at PTF Tennis Complex on Monday. "Our players made history by winning both the singles and doubles titles at the ITF Futures."



Secretary Col (R) Zia Muhammad Shoaib's Tufail, national play-performance at the Muhammad ITF Futures as a Shoaib, Muzammil major achievement Murtaza and Abid for Pakistan tennis. Ali, and Movenpick and thanked all sponsors. Generalisors for their role in the National General sors for their successful organization. He said Pakistan's "Tennis is project- tennis is progressing in a positive and soft rapidly, with national image of Pakistan players making their worldwide, and for- mark internationally. eign players are joined by PTF He singled out returning home with

pleasant memories." Qureshi said. "We are playing our role as peace ambassadors." To improve player performance, he said, Muhammad Shoaib will travel to the United States for training while Muzammil Murtaza will head to South Africa. He added that, for the first time in the country's history, nine Pakistani players have earned ATP rankings. Qureshi expressed regret over the postponement of former world champion Bjorn Borg's visit but said the tennis legend will visit Pakistan soon.



**PEAK POINT** Kazakhstan, trying kind that etches itself moment was bitter- our level best to get a into memory. But sweet. That goal — goal but it was just Samad did not cele- one of only two not coming." Samad brate wildly. "I was- Pakistan scored in the told Dawn. "I asked n't very excited con- tournament — came the coach to play as a sidering we had in a 4-1 loss to hosts striker, and one already conceded Kazakhstan. Two minute later I four goals," he said. more defeats fol- received a cross from His coach, lowed: 2-1 to Russia the right. I positioned Mohammad Essa, and 1-0 to myself and headed was delighted. But Azerbaijan. Pakistan the ball home." It was for the 16-year-old finished bottom of down against a bullet header, the from Swat, the their group.

## Pakistan Sports Board takes action on unreconciled grants, set to adjust Rs. 41 million from future funds

**PSB Warns Pakistan Tennis Federation of Future Grant Adjustments After Financial Non-Compliance**



PEAK POINT

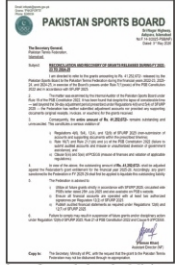
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has formally notified the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) regarding the reconciliation and adjustment of grants totaling Rs. 41,252,072 (forty-one million two hundred fifty-two thousand and seventy-two rupees) that were released

time lapse and beyond the prescribed timelines for financial adjustment and reporting, the Pakistan Tennis Federation has failed to submit the required adjustment accounts. Additionally, the necessary supporting financial documentation, such as original receipts, invoices, and vouchers related to the utilization of the grants, has not been provided. The PSB has emphasized that, in the absence of proper reconciliation and supporting documentation, the entire amount of Rs. 41,252,072 remains outstanding and unreconciled in official records. This non-compliance has been noted as a violation of the financial management and governance standards that govern the use of public funds. In response to these findings, the



Pakistan Sports Board has decided that the outstanding amount will be deducted from the future grant allocation for the financial year 2025-26. Any grants approved or released to the Federation in that year will first be used to settle the outstanding liability until the full amount is reconciled. The Board has also instructed the Pakistan Tennis Federation to strictly adhere to financial governance standards in all future

dealings. This includes ensuring that all grants and expenditures are managed according to the applicable rules and procedures, with proper dual-authority financial controls and authorized signatories, supported by complete and verifiable documentation. The Federation has been reminded of its duty to prepare and publish audited financial statements in a timely manner, as required by the governing regulatory framework. The PSB has cautioned that continued non-compliance with financial regulations could lead to further administrative actions, such as the suspension of future grants and other measures allowed under the applicable rules and constitutional provisions for sports federations. A copy of the communication has



been forwarded to the Ministry of Inter Coordination, with a request to ensure that the grant disbursement process complies with the necessary reconciliation and compliance procedures.

# Cigarette Tax hike in budget 2026-27 could generate Rs. 51 billion in additional revenue

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) has suggested an increase in the Federal Excise Duty (FED) in the upcoming Federal Budget 2026-27, including a minimum adjustment of Rs. 35 per pack on economy brands and Rs. 21 per pack on premium brands, alongside a gradual transition toward a unified tax tier structure, noting that this could generate Rs. 51 billion in additional revenue, prevent around 369,000 youth from initiating smoking, and reduce the number of smokers by approximately 271,000 nationwide. Dr. Khalil Ahmad, Program Manager at SPARC, stated that smoking continues to impose a significant burden

on Pakistan's healthcare system, contributing to approximately 192,000 deaths annually. He noted with concern that cigarette tax rates have remained unchanged since February 2023, leading to a substantial erosion in the real value of tobacco taxes due to inflation. As a result, cigarettes particularly low-cost brands have become increasingly affordable. He further observed that when tobacco taxes remain stagnant, cigarettes become cheaper in real terms, thereby increasing affordability and drawing more people especially children and youth towards smoking. "Since February 2023, the real FED has declined by about 23 percent, while the tax share on top brands has fallen



from 47.4 percent to 41.7 percent. This widening policy gap requires urgent correction," he added. Dr. Khalil Ahmad highlighted that Pakistan remains among the cheapest cigarette markets in the region. A pack of 20 cigarettes costs Int\$3.46 in Pakistan, compared to Int\$6.32 in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and Int\$10.91 in South-East

Asia (SEA), making cigarettes approximately 83 percent cheaper than EMR and up to 215 percent cheaper than SEA. He warned that this significant price disparity fuels higher consumption and increases the risk of youth initiation. Beyond health concerns, he emphasized that tobacco use represents a major economic burden. The annual economic cost of smoking in Pakistan is estimated at Rs. 1,835 billion around 1.6 percent of GDP, far exceeding the revenue generated from tobacco taxation. The evidence is clear: tobacco costs Pakistan far more than it contributes. Healthcare expenditures and productivity losses associated with smoking related diseases amount to billions each year.

A progressive, inflation-adjusted tobacco taxation policy is essential to reverse this trend. He further recommended a pragmatic and progressive taxation approach, suggesting higher annual FED increases on economy brands (around 35 percent) and inflation-indexed increases on premium brands (around 6.5 percent), in order to narrow the price gap between tiers. He stressed that reducing this gap is critical, as cheaper cigarettes are more likely to attract young and first-time smokers. Addressing concerns regarding illicit trade, Dr. Khalil Ahmad stated that independent evidence indicates it accounts for approximately 33-34 percent of total cigarette consumption. He fur-

ther emphasized that, as a signatory to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, Pakistan is obligated to strengthen tobacco taxation to safeguard public health. He added that under the MPOWER strategy, increasing tobacco taxes is widely recognized as the most effective measure to reduce tobacco consumption. He further stated that increasing the Federal Excise Duty by Rs. 35 on economy brands and Rs. 21 on premium brands is aligned with global best practices. It will strengthen national revenue, fulfill Pakistan's international commitments, and most importantly protect children and youth from lifelong addiction.

## KMU IHS campuses under scrutiny as nursing students question PNMC registration, Dr Zia's dual role

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Nursing students of Khyber Medical University Institute of Health Sciences Islamabad have raised serious questions over the legal status of KMU IHS campuses, claiming that several institutes are operating without registration from the Pakistan Nursing and Midwifery Council. The students said they took admission on merit, paid around

Rs120,000 per semester and studied for years believing they were part of a recognised public sector medical university. However, they claimed they later found that the Islamabad institute was not registered with the nursing council. According to the students, 232 nursing students across four batches have been affected. The first batch of 32 students has already graduated, but five months have passed and they

still have not received PNMC registration or internship placements. Students said nursing registration is like a driving licence for a nurse. Without it, they cannot get jobs, continue their career properly or work as professional nurses. The protesting students also claimed that the issue is not limited to the Islamabad campus. They alleged that several KMU IHS campuses, including Swabi, Islamabad, Kurram,

Hazara, Mardan, Kohat, Nowshera, Dr Upper, Karak, Bannu, DI Khan and Buner, are not registered with the nursing council. They said nearly 2,000 students could be affected if the matter is not resolved. The matter has also drawn attention because Dr Zia Ul Haq is reportedly serving as Vice Chancellor of KMU while also holding charge as Executive Director of HEC. Students and education circles say this dual role

raises serious questions about oversight, accountability and conflict of interest. Students said they contacted the university administration, registrar, dean, main campus officials and the VC office several times, but received only promises and delays. They said earlier protests were stopped after written assurances, but the commitments were not fulfilled. The students have demanded immediate

PNMC registration, paid internships for graduates, hospital placement in Islamabad and written protection against any action for peaceful protest. They warned that if their demands are not accepted, they will expand their protest to the Islamabad Press Club, HEC office, Pakistan Nursing Council and all relevant forums, while remaining within the law.

# Opinion & Editorial

## How Pakistan emerges triumphant in one of the novel dogfights in recent history

By Sabina Siddiqui

What really happens during the aerial clash near the Pakistan-India border on 7th May 2025? How was such a large-scale dogfight unclosed itself, and who ultimately was victorious? Many puzzles remain unanswered, and several aspects are still shrouded in uncertainty. However, an article published by Türkiye Today sheds light on certain key developments, pointing that how "Shaheens" of the Pakistani Air Force employed advanced combat strategies to counter a numerically superior adversary. According to the report, in the early hours of 7th May, 2025, reports began to emerge of a highly complex and large-scale aerial engagement near the border. Some accounts even described it as one of the most prominent air battles in recent history. Unverified reports claim that around 72 aircraft from the Indian Air Force were involved in the operation, while approximately 42 Pakistani Air Force (PAF) jets responded with a coordinated and calculated counter-strategy. These claims also point to the use of a sophisticated "kill chain" system during the engagement, allegedly resulting in damage to Indian aircraft. However, it is important to note that these figures and claims have not been independently verified. A senior

Pakistani Air Force official was quoted as saying that although more targets could have been engaged from a technical standpoint, deliberate restraint was exercised to avoid escalations between two Nuclear-armed states. Subsequently, in certain international interviews and statements, Indian military leadership acknowledged that some of their aircraft were annihilated during the encounter. However, they emphasized that the issue was not merely numerical strength, but rather related to operational strategy and preparedness. India has not released comprehensive details or independent evidence regarding the reported losses. The report attributes the success of the Pakistani Air Force to an integrated digital and operational framework referred to as the "Detect-Track-Engage Kill Chain." This system reportedly connects radar, satellite feeds, cyber systems, and combat aircraft into a unified network. According to a defence analyst, this model enables real-time situational awareness for pilots by utilizing satellite intelligence, encrypted data links, and live air data sharing. The report also reveals that, alongside conventional airpower, cyber warfare may have played a significant role in the engagement. Claims made include disruption or influence over communication systems, net-

work infrastructure, and digital platforms. However, these assertions remain unverified, and experts caution that definitive conclusions about such complex cyber effects require solid technical evidence. Some defence analysts argue that in modern warfare, electronic warfare, data links, and network-centric operations have become significantly critical. Air combat is no longer defined solely by aircraft and weaponry; it is now equally a battle of information, sensors, and communication systems. Regional Implications The narrative surrounding this incident has reignited discussions on military balance and deterrence between Pakistan and India. Analysts suggest that such engagements highlight the growing importance of advanced technologies, cyber capabilities, and integrated defense strategies in shaping future conflicts. While the 7th May 2025 clash is being presented by some as a case study in modern warfare and network-centric operations, many aspects of the incident remain contested and unverified. What this episode does seem to indicate, however, is that future air wars will not be confined to traditional weapon systems alone. Digital networks, cyber capabilities, and even space-based assets are likely to play a decisive role in determining final outcomes.

## Big business of bad advice

Muhammad Hamid Zaman

In the last few days in Pakistan, I have been speaking to aspiring students who are eager to pursue higher education abroad. While one can debate whether the pastures are actually greener abroad or not, there is no question that an ever greater number of students are not thrilled about the local offerings. This is particularly true for students who are interested in basic or applied sciences and see limited opportunities in the country beyond one or two institutions. But that is not the only reason for them to seriously consider options outside the country. I heard palpable anxiety about the economic future of the country, amplified by voices in their own networks that is encouraging them to leave. There are, of course, lots of reasons why that chorus of voices is getting louder, and whether everything in that chorus is worth listening to. The desire to find stability, seek opportunities for intellectual development, follow dreams of spending a life in pursuit of knowledge are natural. I am all too familiar with that desire, for I chose that path and live that life. What is, however, unacceptable is for individuals (and businesses) to exploit these desires and create unethical practices offering dubious advice at an astronomical price. There is now a whole industry of consultants that have seemingly made themselves indispensable. It is now assumed that landing an admission offer is next to impossible without the 'support' of these consultants. The services range from basic conversation to 'building a profile' that would attract the attention of admissions officers. For the right price, some consultants are willing to write students' essays that create an impression that the applicant basically cured cancer, or created a new battery that would solve the country's energy crisis. There have been instances of manipulating transcripts as well. All available in the free market of admission consulting. Courtesy Tribune

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## Crisscrossing in the Strait

There is some high confusion in the Strait of Hormuz as Iran and the US are apparently testing each other's patience. Tehran claims that it has forced a US warship to retreat from the water channel by firing warning shots, whereas the US Centcom denies it saying it will continue to escort vessels, in a tit for tat. The UAE has, meanwhile, raised the stakes accusing the IIRC of firing two drones on an oil-tanker affiliated with its state oil company, Adnoc, setting a surge in the prices of the black gold. Brent crude registered a rise by 3.4%, to settle at \$111.81 a barrel. President Trump was, nonetheless, seen maneuvering behind the curtains to end the stalemate in pursuit of a deal with the Islamic republic. There are concerns that Washington's forward movement of naval vessels could ultimately lead back to war. That fear was squarely visible as US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent pinned hopes in Chinese diplomacy, urging Iran's strategic ally to join the US in supporting the opening of the Strait for uninterrupted navigation. Diplomacy is, however, making some silent progress as Pakistan is seen astutely handling the crisis as an honest broker between the arch foes. Fifteen Iranian sailors from the seized Toussa cargo ship were handed over to Pakistan by the Americans in a goodwill gesture for their safe repatriation back home.

## Mega project launched to link margalla road directly to motorway for citizens' convenience



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday visited the site of the Margalla Road-Motorway extension project and inspected ongoing construction activities.

During the visit, he was given a detailed briefing on various components of the project.

Work has officially begun on a major infrastructure project aimed at providing citizens with a faster and more convenient route, as Margalla

Road is set to be directly linked to the Motorway under a new mega development initiative.

According to officials, the 2.7-kilometre-long project will feature a three-lane road on both sides, along with a two-lane service road. The plan also includes an interchange on GT Road, two underpasses, and a bridge to ensure smooth traffic flow.

Minister Mohsin Naqvi directed authorities to ensure that the Sangiani Interchange on GT Road—part of the project—is completed by

July 31. He emphasised that the new link will provide an alternative, faster, and more accessible route between Islamabad and the Motorway, significantly reducing traffic congestion and travel time.

"All resources must be utilized to complete the project within the stipulated time," the Interior Minister instructed, adding that quality, transparency, and speed are being ensured in every government project. Providing citizens with improved and faster travel facilities, he said, is the government's top priority. During the briefing, it was revealed that the project is expected to be completed by December 2026, while the remaining 2.5-kilometre section will be executed by the Punjab government.

Chairman CDA, JG Islamabad Police, DC Islamabad, and other relevant officials were also present during the visit.

## Govt advances auto policy through stakeholder consultations

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Tuesday chaired a consultative meeting with key auto sector stakeholders to advance the formulation of the upcoming auto policy and budget proposals.

The meeting was held with representatives of the Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts and Accessories Manufacturers (PAAPAM) and the Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association (PAMA), said a news release.

During the meeting, extensive consultations were held with auto parts manufacturers regarding proposed duties on automotive parts and the broader contours of the upcoming auto policy.

The SAPM emphasized that



all budget proposals would be finalized on the basis of consensus, ensuring that stakeholders' input is fully incorporated into the policymaking process.

He highlighted that the Secretary for Industries and Production and the Chief Executive Officer of the Engineering Development Board (EDB) are working in close coordination with the auto sector to prepare comprehensive and well-informed budget proposals.

According to an official statement, proposals are under consideration to provide protection.

## FinMin Aurangzeb engages insurers, mutual funds on Budget 2026-27 proposals



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb held separate consultative meetings with delegations from the Insurance Association of Pakistan (IAP) and the Mutual Funds Association of Pakistan (MUFAP) on Monday as part of pre-budget discussions for FY2026-27, focusing on taxation, savings mobilisation, and regulatory reforms aimed at strengthening Pakistan's financial sector. During his meeting with the IAP, led by Chairman IAP Shoaib Javed Hussain, the minister welcomed the delegation and appreciated the engagement of the insurance industry in contributing to the budget consultation process,

read an official statement. He emphasised the need for sustained dialogue with key sectors to ensure that policy measures remain aligned with economic priorities and contribute to long-term financial stability and growth.

The delegation presented a set of proposals focusing primarily on taxation and regulatory considerations with respect to the insurance sector. Participants discussed various aspects of the existing taxation framework, including the interaction between federal and provincial levies, and their implications for the sector. The need for consistency, coherence, and predictability in the overall tax structure was highlighted in the context of facilitating sectoral development. Discussions also covered the need to ensure clarity in the application of sector-specific laws governing insurance, particularly in relation to the broader taxation framework. The delegation underscored the importance of ensuring that existing legal and regulatory principles remain appropriately aligned with evolving policy and accounting standards.

## Sehrai's martyrdom shining symbol of freedom movement: Mushaful Mulick

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD:

Mushaful Husseyn Mulick, wife of jailed Hurriyat leader Yasir Malik and chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organisation, on Tuesday said that May 5 symbolises resolve and sacrifice as she paid tribute to martyred Hurriyat leader Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai on his death anniversary, recalling his lifelong struggle for the freedom of Kashmir and vowing to carry forward the mission of the martyrs. In her statement, Mushaful Mulick said that Sehrai had dedicated his entire life to the Kashmir cause, standing firm for truth in the face of oppression. She noted that despite enduring imprisonment and severe hardships, he never wavered from his principled stance. She described his martyrdom as a "shining symbol" of the ongoing freedom movement, adding that the sacrifices of other leaders, including Javed Ahmed Mir, remained an integral chapter of the struggle.

## Diverted transshipment vessel docks at Gwadar, boosting port's trade hub status, Junaid Anwar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry announced on Tuesday the arrival of another transshipment vessel at Gwadar Port.

In a statement, the minister said M.V. Shou Long 618 had the first such cargo vessel to call there in May, marking a key step in positioning Pakistan as a regional maritime hub.

The vessel carried 16,077 metric tonnes of cargo carrying 13,059 packages of Chinese-origin industrial equipment and pipes originally destined for Kuwait. It was diverted from its route and offloaded at Gwadar.

Junaid Chaudhry noted that



this followed four transshipment vessels called at Gwadar in April, signalling a steady rise in operations. The trend underscores the port's growing role as an alternative hub amid regional navigational challenges, he added.

The minister said the Gwadar Port Authority was handling berthing, cargo operations, and documentation efficiently, proving the port's readiness for complex logistics. He highlighted Gwadar's strategic Arabian Sea location as a secure gateway.

## Police kill dangerous suspect wanted in multiple murders following gunfight in Bannu



ABDUL SALAM BAITAB

BANNU: In a major operation, police have killed a dangerous suspect, Imran, who was wanted in connection with the murders of five individuals, during an exchange of fire. The suspect was identified as Imran, son of

Inayatullah. A resident of Jaman Road, Khashni Kallah, he had been evading arrest for his involvement in the killings of several people. According to details, District Police Officer (DPO) Yasir Afridi received credible information that Imran, who was wanted for the murder of five people, was hiding in the nearby forests of the Khashni Kala area. Acting on this confirmed information, DPO Yasir Afridi swiftly initiated a well-coordinated operation. The SDPO City and SHO City, along with the police team, conducted a raid in the area. When the police attempted to arrest Imran, he opened fire on the police party in an effort to escape.

## Governor Kundi urges early announcement of new NFC Award

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday said all political forces must play a united and serious role for securing the constitutional and legitimate rights of the province, urging the federal government to announce a new National Finance Commission (NFC) Award at the earliest.

Addressing a dialogue on the National Finance Commission organized by Federal Youth Parliament Pakistan at the Governor House, the Governor called for revisiting Khyber Pakhtunwha's share in the NFC Award to ensure development



and stability in the province.

The event was attended by Pakistan Peoples Party parliamentary leader Ahmad Karim Kundi, former provincial ministers Inayatullah Khan and Sikandar Sherpao, Member Provincial Assembly Nisar Baz, Advocate Alam Khan, Wafa Wazir, members of the provincial assembly, office-bearers and members of the Federal Youth.

## KMU IHS campuses under scrutiny as nursing students question PNMC registration, Dr Zia's dual role

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Nursing students of Khyber Medical University Institute of Health Sciences Islamabad have raised serious questions over the legal status of KMU IHS campuses, claiming that several institutes are operating without registration from the Pakistan Nursing and Midwifery Council. The students said they took admission on merit, paid around Rs120,000 per semester and studied for years believing they were part of a recognised public sector medical university. However, they claimed they later found that the Islamabad institute was not registered with the nursing council. According to the students, 232 nursing students across four batches have been affected. The first batch of 32 students has already graduated, but five months have passed and they still have not received PNMC registration or internship placements. Students said nursing registration is like a driving licence for a nurse. Without it, they cannot get jobs, continue their career properly or work as professional nurses. The protesting students also claimed that the issue is not limited to the Islamabad campus. They alleged that several KMU IHS campuses, including Swabi, Islamabad, Kurram, Hazara,

Kardan, Kohat, Nowshera, Dir Upper, Karak, Bannu, DI Khan and Buner, are not registered with the nursing council. They said nearly 2,000 students could be affected if the matter is not resolved. The matter has also drawn attention because Dr Zia Ul Haq is reportedly serving as Vice Chancellor of KMU while also holding charge as Executive Director of HEC. Students and education circles say this dual role raises serious questions about oversight, accountability and conflict of interest. Students said they contacted the university administration, registrar, dean, main campus officials and the VC office several times, but received only promises and delays. They said earlier protests were stopped after written assurances, but the commitments were not fulfilled. The students have demanded immediate PNMC registration, paid internships for graduates, hospital placement in Islamabad and written protection against any demands for acceptance. They warned that if their actions are not accepted, they will expand their protest to the Islamabad Press Club, HEC office, Pakistan Nursing Council and all relevant forums, while remaining within the law.

## Peshawar High Court Bannu bench declares FIR against judge humayun dilawar and his brother Null and Void

ABDUL SALAM BAITAB

BANNU: The Bannu Bench of the Peshawar High Court has declared null and void the FIR registered under the Anti-Corruption law against Judge Humayun Dilawar and his brother. The FIR had been lodged under the directions of the provincial government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in what was termed a retaliatory move following the sentencing of PTI founder Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana case. The PTI provincial gov-

ernment had filed the FIR, which was described as baseless and fabricated, in response to Judge Humayun Dilawar's role in sentencing Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi. The FIR was challenged in court by Judge Dilawar and his brother. Today, a two-member bench of the Peshawar High Court Bannu Bench, comprising Justice Tariq Afridi and Justice Sabitullah, heard the case.

