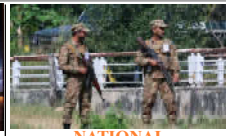




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QUETTA VOICE

Bilawal Bhutto Drops Political Bombshell: Sarfraz Bugti to Complete Full Term in Balochistan

Syed Ali Shah,
Ali Hamza:

Quetta: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday firmly signaled that Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti will complete his full five-year constitutional term, putting to rest rumors of an in-house change in the Balochistan Assembly.

Addressing PPP workers at the Chief Minister's Secretariat, Bilawal praised the performance of the provincial government and announced major initiatives in the health sector.

"The Chief Minister and his team have met deadlines and delivered on several important projects in a short span of time," he said, adding that these programs would be expanded across Balochistan during the government's complete tenure.

The PPP chairman inaugurated the province's first paperless modern trauma center in Quetta, named after Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

He also launched Balochistan's first People's Air Ambulance Service and virtually inaugurated 164 Basic Health Units (BHUs) across the province.

These developments aim to significantly improve emer-



gencies medical care and access to basic healthcare in one of Pakistan's largest and most challenging provinces. Bilawal lauded Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and his

cabinet for their focus on health and education sectors. His remarks were met with loud applause inside the hall, as a visibly pleased CM Bugti smiled at the strong en-

dorsement from the PPP chief.

In a notable announcement regarding inter-provincial cooperation, Bilawal said the Sindh government would seek Balochistan's support to introduce Artificial Intelligence in the recruitment process of government employees, particularly for tasks and interviews.

"We will seek the support of the Balochistan government in this regard," he added, triggering another round of clapping.

The visit comes at a time when the coalition government in Balochistan, backed by PPP, PML-N, and other allies, has faced speculation about political instability. Bilawal's clear message of continuity is expected to bring greater stability to the provincial administration.

Officials believe the new trauma center, air ambulance service, and expanded network of BHUs will help address critical healthcare gaps, especially in remote areas. The projects reflect a renewed focus on public welfare and infrastructure development in the province.

The event underscores the PPP's continued support to the current Balochistan setup while highlighting collaborative efforts between Sindh and Balochistan for modernizing governance through technology.

FC Balochistan Seizes Illegal Goods Worth Rs49.3 Million in Anti-Smuggling Operation



Yousuf Sasoli

NOKKUNDI: In a major crackdown against illegal trade and smuggling, Frontier Corps Balochistan South conducted a successful operation in the Nili Patara of Nokkundi, confiscating a large quantity of prohibited items including foreign cigarettes, supari (betel nut), and gutka.

According to officials, the total value of the seized consignment is estimated at ap-

proximately Rs49.3 million. The confiscated goods were later destroyed by burning under official supervision.

A spokesperson for Frontier Corps Balochistan South stated that the operation is part of an ongoing campaign against illegal trade, smuggling networks, and the circulation of substances harmful to public health across the region.

The spokesperson emphasized that the force is pursuing a zero-tolerance policy against

smuggling and unlawful activities, adding that such operations will continue to ensure the rule of law and protect public interests. Local residents appreciated the action, saying the crackdown would help discourage illegal businesses and protect the younger generation from harmful substances.

The operation highlights the continued efforts of security forces to combat smuggling and maintain law and order in Balochistan.

Iran ceasefire a favour to Pakistan's 'terrific people, field marshal and PM': Trump



NEWS DESK:

United States President Donald Trump said on Friday that the ceasefire with Iran was made as a "favour" to Pakistan and at the request of other countries.

"We really did the ceasefire at the request of other nations, I would not have been in favour of it. We did it as a favour to Pakistan, they are terrific people, the field marshal, the prime minister," he said while talking to reporters aboard Air Force One on his return trip from a state visit to China.

"I wouldn't have really been in favour of it, but we did it as a favour to Pakistan — terrific people, the field marshal and the prime minister. pic.twitter.com/B3a3AqpeNl

He also indicated that he could accept a 20-year halt to Iran's nuclear activity while dismissing the latest proposal from

Iran as "unacceptable" 20 years is enough. But the level of guarantee from them... it's got to be a real 20 years. pic.twitter.com/cic68rTAUc

Trump: Well, hooked at it and if I don't like the first sentence, I just throw it away.

Trump: An unacceptable sentence. If they have any nuclear in any... pic.twitter.com/K2P5wdr1a

2026 Pakistan's mediation process facing difficulties but remains active: Iran's Araghchi Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Pakistan's mediation efforts regarding regional tensions had "not failed" but were currently facing difficulties. He added that Tehran would welcome any constructive role played by China to help ease the situation and support diplomatic progress.

Speaking at the Iranian Embassy in New Delhi, Araghchi said Iran was attempting to pre-empt the current ceasefire in order to give diplomacy an oppor-

tunity to move forward. He added that Tehran has "no trust" in the US and is interested in negotiating with Washington only if it is serious. Iran is trying to keep the ceasefire to give diplomacy a chance, he told reporters during a press conference.

"The mediation process by Pakistan has not failed yet, but it is in a very difficult course, mostly because of the Americans' behaviour and the mistrust which exists between us," Araghchi said.

"Contradictory messages" have made us reluctant about the real intention of the Americans in negotiations, Araghchi added. He also acknowledged the impact of US sanctions on Tehran, saying Iran fully understood the consequences of the restrictions imposed by Washington.

In comments carried by Iran's IRIB broadcaster, he said Iran is not to blame for disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, and that Tehran did not initiate the war and is only defending itself.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Balochistan Cracks Down on Official Vehicle Misuse with Strict Austerity Measures

Asim Khan: QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has taken a decisive step toward transparency and fiscal responsibility by introducing strict reforms to end the misuse of official vehicles. Led by Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, the initiative reflects a broader push for austerity, accountability, and efficient use of public resources.

For years, the unauthorized use of government vehicles has been a visible symbol of administrative excess. The newly enforced ban on after-hours use, without prior approval, aims to dismantle this longstanding practice. By extending the directive to former governors, ex-chief ministers, retired officials, and other non-entitled individuals, the government has signaled a zero-tolerance approach.

GPS Tracking Systems in All Official Vehicles

A key component of the reform is a comprehensive audit of the entire government vehicle fleet.

Authorities will now ensure that fuel is issued only to verified and registered vehicles, closing gaps that previously enabled misuse.

Additionally, outdated vehicles manufactured before 2005 will be phased out through auctions, helping reduce maintenance costs and streamline the fleet.

The introduction of GPS tracking systems in all official vehicles marks a major shift to-



ward digital governance. Combined with Safe City surveillance cameras, these measures are designed to monitor vehicle movement, prevent unauthorized usage, and strengthen oversight across urban areas.

The strict ban on

taking official vehicles outside the province without prior approval further reinforces accountability.

Austerity Measures are Both Timely and Necessary

From an economic standpoint, these austere-

ty measures are both timely and necessary. With limited public resources and growing financial pressures, ensuring responsible government spending has become critical. The crackdown on vehicle misuse not only ad-

dresses financial leaks but also sends a strong message about reforming governance practices in Balochistan.

However, the success of this policy will depend entirely on its implementation. Past re-

forms have often struggled due to selective enforcement and lack of continuity. To build public trust, authorities must ensure cross-the-board accountability, without exceptions or political considerations.

If enforced effec-

tively, this initiative could serve as a model for wider public sector reforms. More importantly, it has the potential to shift institutional culture, moving away from privilege-driven practices toward a system rooted in responsi-

bility and transparency. The policy sets the right tone. Its long-term impact will depend on whether the government maintains the same level of commitment in enforcing these rules as it has shown in announcing them.

How AI Is Making Modern Production Smarter and Faster

Syed Muhammad Wisem: AI is changing the way we create and collaborate, with 41% of brands already using it for video production. Production teams now have to create more content faster than ever. Staying on track while keeping ideas fresh is a daily challenge. AI is changing how production teams plan, shoot, and edit. It's making the process faster, smarter, and more creative.

As the need for faster content grows, AI is becoming a key tool in modern studios. It helps creators stay up to date with new trends and what audiences want. Studios are using AI to work faster and save money. According to Deloitte's 2024 report, 42% of executives say it boosts efficiency and productivity.

Let's explore how AI is changing production from planning to editing. You'll learn how it saves time, cuts costs, and boosts creativity. By the end, you'll see how it's making modern production smarter and faster.

The Evolution of AI in Media Production

AI in media production has evolved rapidly over the years. Initially, it served as a basic tool for handling repetitive tasks such as video editing, adding visual effects, and creating computer graphics. Over time, it has transformed into a powerful creative partner that now supports teams at every stage of production.

In the beginning, AI was mainly used for CGI, video automation, and voice synthesis. These tools helped save time but still required significant human input. Today, AI plays an active role across pre-production, production, and post-production, making the entire process more efficient and consistent.

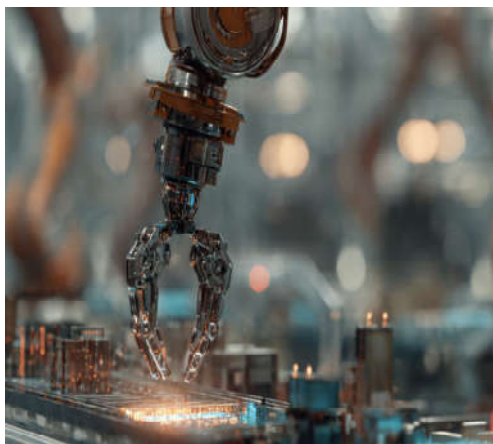
During pre-production, it assists with scriptwriting, budgeting, and storyboarding. In production, it enhances camera tracking, lighting adjustments, and virtual set design. Finally, in post-production, it streamlines editing, color correction, sound design, and even creates advanced visual effects.

Major studios such as Netflix and Warner Bros. are now using AI-driven tools to analyze audience preferences, optimize workflows, and enhance storytelling. As a result, AI has shifted from being a simple technical assistant to becoming an essential force shaping the future of modern media production.

Why Production Houses Are Turning to AI

Production houses are facing rising costs and tighter schedules. Keeping up with deadlines while staying creative has become a major challenge. To stay efficient, many studios are now using AI to manage time and 60% of post-production studios utilize AI-powered editing tools to reduce editing time, reduce expenses. This trend is growing rapidly as the global AI in media and entertainment market is projected to reach \$34.1 billion by 2027.

The demand for quick content is also increasing. Streaming platforms are pushing for faster production. At the same time, 65% of advertising agencies are already using AI tools for content creation, showing how quickly the industry is adapting to new technology. There is also a shortage of skilled post-production professionals. AI tools step in to



handle repetitive work like cutting scenes or syncing dialogue. This gives creative teams more time to focus on storytelling and innovation while keeping projects on schedule and within budget.

How Production Houses Are Using AI

AI is changing how production houses work from start to finish. It supports every stage of filmmaking, from planning and shooting to editing and final delivery. In Pre-Production, AI is making the pre-production stage faster and more creative. Writers now use tools like ChatGPT, Jasper, and Sudowrite to draft scripts or explore story ideas. In fact, 60% of film studios are exploring AI-driven scriptwriting tools to speed up brainstorming and script development.

Some tools analyze data to predict how well an actor will connect with audiences. AI software like Celtx and StudioBinder helps plan budgets and schedules. These tools make it easier for studios to manage costs, track

spending, and stay on time. Production AI is transforming the way films are shot on set. For example, AI-powered cameras can automatically track actors, adjust framing, and optimize lighting in real time. This helps directors capture perfect shots faster and reduces the need for repeated takes. According to MarketsandMarkets, the use of AI cameras in film production is expected to grow by 22% annually by 2027.

Virtual production is becoming more common. Tools like Unreal Engine and NVIDIA Omniverse allow filmmakers to create realistic digital environments before filming begins. These virtual sets save time, cut costs, and give teams more creative freedom, especially for large-scale or fantasy projects.

AI also improves color grading and sound editing. It can automati-

cally balance colors, refine lighting, remove background noise, and sync soundtracks. Even some free tools can apply complex color grading for a consistent look. These features save time and make the final product polished and professional.

In addition, AI enhances VFX, CGI, and localization. It removes green screens, fills missing frames, and generates realistic effects quickly. Voice tools like Resemble.ai and ElevenLabs speed up dubbing and translations for multiple languages.

The use of AI in video editing has reduced production time by an average of 30%, showing how much it improves efficiency. AI also helps with versioning and distribution. It can create multiple edits for different platforms like social media, TV, or YouTube Shorts. This allows studios to repurpose content easily and deliver it quickly. Overall, AI makes post-production faster, more precise, and more creative.

Case Studies: How AI is Shaping Modern Production

Case Study 1: Netflix Builds a Cloud-Based VFX Studio

Netflix, one of the biggest entertainment companies in the world, began producing its own content in 2012. To make collaboration easier, the company wanted to create a visual effects (VFX) studio in the clouds. This would let artists work from different countries together without being limited by location.

Using NICE DCV and Amazon EC2 G4 instances, Netflix built fast and secure remote workstations. These cloud tools allowed artists to edit, animate, and

render with high-quality visuals while keeping performance smooth. The system helped Netflix move from testing to full production in just one year.

By using AWS, Netflix reduced costs and technical barriers for creators. The company could now attract top VFX and animation talent from anywhere in the world. This innovation showed how cloud and AI tools can transform modern film production.

Case Study 2: Croptify's AI Innovation in Grain Grading

In South Australia, Anna Falkner and Andrew Hannon founded Croptify to make grain testing faster and more accurate. Traditional testing relied on human inspection, which often caused mistakes and disagreements.

The founders wanted a smarter AI-based way to grade crops. Working with the Australian Institute for Machine Learning (AIML), they built AI software that could analyze grain samples in seconds. Their system reduced testing time from 24 minutes to just 90 seconds and achieved 98% accuracy. This made the grain supply chain faster and more reliable.

In 2024, Croptify raised \$2 million AUSD from investors to expand its technology. Their success proved that AI can bring real value to agriculture by making testing faster, faster, and more consistent. Falkner advises businesses to focus on real problems first and then see if AI is the right solution.

Case Study 3: What's Next Entertainment's Use of AI in Creative Production

Trump-Xi Summit Signals Trade Progress as Taiwan Tensions Overshadow Talks

NEWS DESK: Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump held high-level talks in Beijing on Thursday, focusing on trade cooperation, global energy security, and rising tensions over Taiwan.

The meeting, held at the Great Hall of the People, marked one of the most significant diplomatic engagements between Washington and Beijing in recent years. Chinese officials described the discussions as constructive, particularly regarding ongoing economic and trade negotiations between the two countries.

According to Beijing, Xi said recent talks between Chinese and American economic teams had produced "positive and balanced" outcomes, raising hopes for improved trade relations after months of uncertainty.

The discussions are aimed at maintaining a fragile trade understanding reached during earlier negotiations, when both sides agreed to reduce escalating tariff pressures and stabilize supply chains.

Despite optimism on trade, Taiwan emerged as the most sensitive issue during the summit. Xi reportedly warned that the Taiwan dispute re-



mains the biggest challenge facing China-U.S. relations and cautioned that mishandling the matter could trigger severe consequences, including direct confrontation between the two powers.

China continues to oppose U.S. military support for Taiwan,

while Washington maintains its commitment to helping the island strengthen its defense capabilities. Reports suggest the United States is still reviewing a major arms package for Taiwan, a move strongly criticized by Beijing.

The summit also focused on the global

energy crisis linked to the ongoing Iran conflict and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for international oil shipments. Both leaders discussed the importance of restoring stability to global energy markets amid fears of prolonged economic uncertainty.

Trump, facing increasing domestic economic pressure due to inflation and the impact of the Middle East conflict, used the visit to push for stronger economic cooperation with China. American officials are seeking expanded Chinese purchases of Boeing aircraft, agri-

cultural goods, and U.S. energy exports as part of efforts to reduce the trade imbalance between the two countries.

Several prominent business leaders accompanied Trump during the visit, including Elon Musk and Jensen Huang, reflecting growing interest

among major corporations in improving access to the Chinese market.

At a formal state banquet later in the evening, Xi described China-U.S. relations as the world's most important bilateral partnership and stressed the need for both nations to man-

age differences carefully while expanding economic cooperation.

Trump also extended an invitation for Xi to visit Washington later this year, signaling continued diplomatic engagement despite deepening geopolitical tensions over trade, technology, and Taiwan.

Iran FM says Tehran has 'no trust' in US despite openness to serious negotiations

NEWS DESK: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Friday said Iran was attempting to preserve the ceasefire in order to give diplomacy an opportunity to move forward.

Speaking at the BRICS foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi, he said Tehran has "no trust" in the US and is interested in negotiating with Washington only if it is serious. Iran is trying to keep the ceasefire open to vessels of "friendly countries", as long as they coordinate

with Iranian officials, and only closed to Iran's "enemies". Top diplomats from the BRICS bloc held fresh talks on the second day of meetings in New Delhi. The gathering comes amid the US-Israeli war with Iran, which began on February 28 but is currently paused under a fragile ceasefire.

India issued a chair's statement at the conclusion of the annual BRICS foreign ministers' meeting instead of a "joint statement" and said "there were differing views among some members on the situation in the Middle East."

The UAE's existing Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline (ADCOPL) also known as the Habshan-Fujairah pipeline, can carry up to 1.8 million barrels per day, and has proved crucial as the country seeks to "maximise direct exports from the Gulf of Oman coast."

CIA director visits Cuba as communist island runs out of oil

NEWS DESK: The head of the CIA visited Cuba on Thursday, an extraordinary step-in contact between Washington and Havana as the communist-run island reels from US pressure, declaring that it is out of oil.

The Central Intelligence Agency, at the heart of the decades-long struggle between the United States and Cuba, confirmed a Cuban government statement about Director John Ratcliffe's visit.

Photos posted by the agency on X showed Ratcliffe alongside several people who blurred out faces meeting with Ramon Romero Curbelo, chief of the intelligence of the Cuban Interior Ministry, and other Cuban officials.

The visit comes during a deepening crisis in US-Cuba relations, with the island enduring constant power outages prompted by President Donald Trump's fuel blockade.

Only one tanker from Russia, a historically ally of the Cuban authorities, has got through. And that oil has now "run out," Energy Minister Vicente de la O Levy told state televi-

sion. "The impact of the blockade is indeed causing us significant harm... because we are still not receiving fuel."

Trump has repeatedly signalled that he wants to topple the communist government in Cuba. According to a report on CBS News, citing unidentified US officials, the Trump administration is also seeking to indict Raul Castro, the 94-year-old brother of the late Cuban communist leader Fidel Castro.

Cuba "has never supported any hostile activity against the United States, nor will it permit actions against any other nation to be carried out from Cuba," it emphasized, referring

to allegations of a Chinese presence.

One of Cuba's last economic lifelines was cut in January when US forces toppled the strongman leader of oil-rich Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, and instituted a fuel blockade.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has renewed an offer of \$100 million in aid on the condition that the assistance be distributed by the Catholic Church, bypassing the government. In an interview with NBC News that aired Thursday, Rubio blamed Cuba for the island's current suffering

relations, with the aim of contributing to the political dialogue between both nations, "a government statement read."

The exchanges "made it possible to demonstrate categorically that Cuba does not constitute a threat to US national security, nor are there any legitimate reasons to include it in the list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism," the Cuban statement added.

Cuba "has never supported any hostile activity against the United States, nor will it permit actions against any other nation to be carried out from Cuba," it emphasized, referring



Trump concludes visit to China, says made 'fantastic trade deals' with Xi

NEWS DESK: India's state-run fuel retailers have raised petrol and diesel prices for the first time in four years by 3 Indian rupees (50.03 per litre, or more than three per cent, according to dealers, to recoup some of the losses incurred due to higher global crude oil prices.

India—the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer—is one of the last major economies to raise retail fuel prices following the disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz by the war started by Israeli attacks on Iran.

State-run Indian Oil Corp, Hindustan Petroleum Corp and Bharat Petroleum Corp, which together control more than 90pc of India's 103,000 fuel stations, tend to set diesel and petrol prices in tandem.

BPCL spokesperson confirmed the price increase at its retail outlets. Indian Oil and HPCL did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Diesel in Delhi will cost 90.67 Indian rupees a litre and petrol 97.77 Indian rupees, reflecting



increases of 3.4pc and 3.2pc, respectively, from 87.67 Indian rupees a litre. Indian Oil Corp fell 2.4pc, and BPCL dropped 3.3pc, and HPCL was down 3.6pc as of 0550 GMT (03:00 PKT).

The direct impact of the higher fuel prices would be larger, said a Madhavi Arora, chief economist at Mumbai-

based Emkay Global Financial Services.

"The hikes are not enough but could be the start of multiple staggered hikes," she said. Fuel austerity steps are being taken as policymakers brace for prolonged energy shock.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged a spirit of conservation, work-from-home practices, and limits on travel and imports, as surging global energy prices put pressure on the country's foreign ex-

change reserves.

Some states have issued notices to government departments this week to restrict travel, avoid physical events and shift meetings online, while also asking them to work from home two days a week, with offices half-staffed.

India is likely to widen the measures to cover millions of employees across the federal government, state-run banks and public sector firms, signalling a system-wide tightening of expenditure and operations as financial risks mount.

The government did not respond to a Reuters email seeking comment.

Passenger from hantavirus cruise quarantines on remote Pitcairn Island

NEWS DESK: A passenger from the hantavirus-stricken MV Hondius cruise ship is in quarantine on Pitcairn Island, a volcanic outcrop in the South Pacific famously settled by mutineers from the HMS Bounty.

The woman, a US citizen, journeyed halfway across the globe to reach remote Pitcairn Island after disembarking from the MV Hondius.

"We can confirm that someone who had contact with the health authorities and the UK Government to manage the situation. The wellbeing of our community remains the top priority."

It was not clear how long the woman might be stuck on Pitcairn Island without telling authorities of her possible exposure to hantavirus.

She will not be allowed to leave the island as long as she "poses a risk to others," the government said in a statement earlier this week.

The UK government— which counts Pitcairn as an overseas territory -- said the woman was not symptomatic, but it was still taking a "precautionary approach."

There is only one grocery store on Pitcairn Island, which typically opens three times a week. The nearest hospitals are in French Polynesia, some 1,350 miles (2,170 kilometres) to the northwest, or New Zealand, about 5,300 kilometres (3,300 miles)

back and forth every few days. The government of French Polynesia said she had done all this without telling authorities of her possible exposure to hantavirus.

She will not be allowed to leave the island as long as she "poses a risk to others," the government said in a statement earlier this week.

The UK government— which counts Pitcairn as an overseas territory -- said the woman was not symptomatic, but it was still taking a "precautionary approach."

There is only one grocery store on Pitcairn Island, which typically opens three times a week. The nearest hospitals are in French Polynesia, some 1,350 miles (2,170 kilometres) to the northwest, or New Zealand, about 5,300 kilometres (3,300 miles)

west. Three people died after the rare rat-borne hantavirus spread through passengers holidaying on the MV Hondius cruise ship, sparking a global health scare.

Health authorities have repeatedly emphasised that the broader risk to public health from the outbreak of the Andes strain of sandfly fever is low. Globally, the death toll remains at three.

No vaccines or specific treatments exist, but health officials have said the risk is low and have dismissed comparisons to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Pitcairn Islands were colonised in 1790 by the mutinous crew of the Royal Navy ship HMS Bounty, led by the master's mate Fletcher Christian.



GCWUF, CI-UAF celebrate 75 years of Pakistan-China diplomatic ties

ISLAMABAD (INP): Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF) hosted a ceremony in collaboration with the Confucius Institute at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (CI-UAF) to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the diplomatic relationship between Pakistan and China. A poster exhibition was inaugurated on the occasion

to highlight the milestones and highlights of bilateral relations between the two countries over the past seven and a half decades, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro. Students of CI-UAF presented vibrant cultural performances focusing on the theme of Pakistan-China friendship. The program included traditional music, dance,

and skits that showcased the warmth and depth of the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. The ceremony also featured special documentaries on Pakistan-China friendship, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and Gwadar Port, providing attendees with deeper insights into the transformative projects that have come

to define the bilateral relationship. The event brought together approximately 400 attendees including Prof. Dr. Kanwal Ameen, Vice Chancellor of GCWUF, Mr. Farooq

Yousaf Sheikh, President of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), and Dr. Saddam Hussain, Local Dean of CI-UAF, along with faculty members.



ISLAMABAD: A Chinese Business delegation of IBI Beijing United Technology called on Prime Minister Muhammad Sheraif.

IHC reserves verdict on Bushra Bibi's meeting, medical access plea

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court has reserved its verdict on a petition seeking permission for family meetings, access to a personal physician and provision of essential items to Bushra Bibi. The case was heard by Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir on a petition filed by her daughter, while senior lawyer Salman Akram Raja appeared in court and presented arguments.

During the hearing, Salman Akram Raja stated that a brief emergency meeting was held on 17 April 2026 on the day of her surgery. He added that the last regular weekly meeting took place on 24 February 2026, after which no routine family meetings were allowed for several weeks, except occasional emergency meetings.

He argued that no violation of jail rules had been established and said that since February, only limited meetings had been permitted. He further contended that repeated restrictions

were being imposed without proper justification, despite her medical condition and recent surgery.

He also claimed that different restrictions were being imposed intermittently and questioned the basis on which meetings were being denied, stating that the matter had been repeatedly taken to court over the past years. Imran Khan lost vision in one eye due to prison torture, claims Salman Akram Raja.

On the other hand, the Advocate General Islamabad Naveed Hayat Malik opposed the petition, arguing that jail superintendents have discretionary authority regarding prisoners' meetings and meetings. He stated that prisoners are required to maintain good conduct and that any violation of rules can lead to restrictions imposed by jail authorities. He also raised objections to the maintainability of the petition, saying an alternative forum exists to challenge jail orders.

IT exports to cross \$4.5b during current FY: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD, May 14 (INP): The National Assembly was informed on Thursday that IT exports are expected to cross 4.5 billion dollars during the current fiscal year.

Minister for Information Technology Shaza Fatima told the House during Question Hour that IT exports have increased by twenty percent. She said the country has doubled its IT exports over the past few years.

The Minister also highlighted in detail the measures being taken for human resource development in the IT sector.

Alluding to the recent spectrum auction,

the Minister for Information Technology said the 4G service will improve and 5G will be available in the federal capital and the four provincial capitals in the next few months.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudry told the house that the National Disaster Management Authority has installed the most modern system to ensure timely weather forecasting.

He said these forecasts are shared with provincial disaster management authorities to help prevent losses caused by extreme weather events.

Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Net Syed Imran Ahmad Shah said Benazir Income Support Program is providing financial assistance to over ten million families.

Two bills were laid before the house today. These included: The Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2026 and The Sea Carriage Shipping Documents Bill, 2026.

Responding to the points raised by opposition members, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry strongly rejected the impression that Pakistanis are being deported from the UAE.

He said Pakistan has excellent relations with the UAE. He said that Pakistan received its highest remittances this month from Saudi Arabia followed by the UAE.

Calling Attention Notice, Parliamentary Secretary for Petroleum Division Mian Khan Bugti said at present, there is no GST on petroleum products.

He said the government has tried to provide relief to the public and mentioned the subsidy being provided to motorcyclists on petrol.

The house will now meet tomorrow at eleven am.

President, PM laud security forces for successful operation in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to the security forces for carrying out a successful operation against terrorists of Fina al-Hindustan in the Nosham area of Barkhan district, Balochistan, where seven terrorists were killed.

In a statement issued by the Presidency, President Asif Ali Zardari lauded the bravery and professionalism of the security forces for the successful action against terrorists, saying the nation would always remember the sacrifices of its brave martyrs and ghazis.

He also paid homage to Major Tausif Ahmed Bhatti and other personnel who embraced martyrdom during the operation. The president said the martyrs had rendered great sacrifice for the peace, security and defence of the country. He prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs and for patience and strength for the bereaved families. He further vowed that the nefarious designs of Fina al-Hindustan and anti-state elements would be foiled at all costs.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also praised the officers and personnel of the security forces for the successful operation in Nosham, Barkhan, and the killing of seven terrorists. "The great sons of the soil set an unparalleled example of loyalty and sacrifice while protecting the country from terrorists," the prime minister said. He said the officers and personnel of the security forces remained engaged day and night in safeguarding the country, adding that the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the brave armed forces in the unwavering resolve to defend the homeland.

He prayed for the martyrs' elevated ranks and expressed

solidarity with their families, saying the nation would never forget the supreme sacrifices rendered by its martyrs. "The great sons of the soil set an unparalleled example of loyalty and sacrifice while protecting the country from terrorists," the prime minister said. He said the officers and personnel of the security forces remained engaged day and night in safeguarding the country, adding that the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the brave armed forces in the unwavering resolve to defend the homeland.

Police arrest key member of Cocaine Queen Pinky's network

KARACHI (INP): Police on Thursday achieved an important breakthrough in the case of Anmol alias Pinky, a notorious drug dealer, who had been arrested in Karachi on Tuesday, when they also arrested a key member of her gang.

Police took Zeeshan into custody during a raid in Gulistan-e-Johar area of the city and started interrogating him. Investigation officials informed that Zeeshan would look after Pinky's bank accounts and her other financial matters.

In order to purchase drugs, payments were made through online apps. The officials explained that Faysal Communication Franchise was used for making payments and receiving the amounts. The investigators said they had obtained details of Zeeshan's bank accounts and online apps.

The law-enforcement agencies (LEAs),

PM vows to make Pakistan economic power with spirit behind nuclear achievement

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed the resolve for making Pakistan an economic power with the same hard work, spirit, and commitment that was demonstrated to make Pakistan a nuclear power.

Addressing the Federal Cabinet meeting held in Islamabad, he paid glowing tribute to all the heroes including scientists, politicians and other institutions that made Pakistan's defence impregnable and made Pakistan a nuclear power. He also prayed for better health to all those heroes.

The Prime Minister said all the governments had also a key role in attaining the nuclear power. He said our nuclear deterrence is for defense and not for offensive purposes.

Shehbaz Sharif said the founder of Pakistan's nuclear programme was certainly Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. However, it was former Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif, who took it to its logical end and conducted nuclear

tests. He said history will always remember May 28 when Pakistan reemerged as a nuclear power and was blessed with the strength that will remain as an asset for country's defence.

Turning to Marka-e-Haq, the Prime Minister said we celebrated the first anniversary of Marka-e-Haq in a very befitting manner on 10th of May.

He said this landmark victory was achieved due to the blessings of Allah Almighty and through national unity and cohesion. He said our valiant armed forces taught the enemy a lesson with great courage and bravery, which they will retain for the rest of their lives.

The Prime Minister also lauded the sacrifices rendered in the fight against terrorism. He said we are making unparalleled efforts to eliminate terrorism. He also lauded the team members for economic improvement during the past two years despite several challenges.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani inaugurating the 33RD Branch of Intiaz Group. Marking Another Milestone in the Expansion of one of Pakistan's Leading Retail Chains.

Hot, dry weather expected across country: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD)

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly hot and dry weather across most parts of the country during the next 24 hours.

However, isolated rain-wind and thunderstorm activity is likely during the evening and night.

Punjab will continue to experience hot and dry weather in most areas. However, Murree and Galiyat may remain mainly dry, though partly

cloudy conditions may develop during the afternoon.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, hot and dry weather is expected across most parts of the province may experience partly cloudy conditions during the evening and night.

Punjab will continue to experience hot and dry weather in most areas. However, Murree and Galiyat may remain mainly dry, though partly

cloudy during the evening and night.

Similarly, Balochistan will experience hot and dry conditions in most areas, although southern districts may witness very hot weather. Isolated partly cloudy conditions with chances of rain-wind and thunderstorms are expected in Zhob, Barkhan, Dera Bugti, Naseerabad and adjoining areas.

In Kashmir, partly cloudy to cloudy weather is expected with chances of isolated rain-wind and thunderstorms, while Gilgit-Baltistan will remain partly cloudy.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry chairing a meeting to review progress on establishing Maritime Educational Endowment Fund.

Deadly Firing Incident Reported on CPEC Road Bridge in Panjgur

NEWS DESK: PANJGUR: Unknown armed men opened fire on a vehicle near the Katagari area bridge on the CPEC Road in Panjgur.

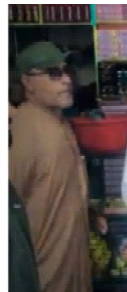
According to police officials, three people were killed while five others sustained injuries in the attack.

Police confirmed that the bodies and injured victims have been shifted to the Teaching Hospital for medical treatment and legal formalities.

Security forces and local authorities have launched an investigation into the incident.



Assistant Commissioner Loralai Intensifies Price Control and Anti-Encroachment Operations



LORALAI: On the special directives of the Deputy Commissioner, Nadeem Akram has intensified operations against overpricing and illegal encroachments across the city.

As part of the campaign, daily inspections are being conducted in various markets, tandoors, bakeries, and meat shops to ensure compliance with official regulations.

Administrative teams visited several tandoors to check the prescribed weight of bread and implementation of government-approved prices.

Inspections were also carried out at bakeries to review cleanliness conditions, food quality standards, and expiry dates of edible items.

He warned that meat shops were inspected to ensure the display of official price lists and proper hygiene arrangements.

Meanwhile, the assistant commissioner also visited various showrooms and shops along Zhoob Road and launched action against illegal encroachments.

Shopkeepers occupying roads and government land illegally were issued strict warnings and instructed to remove encroachments immediately.

charging or selling low-quality food items. Shopkeepers occupying roads and government land illegally were issued strict warnings and instructed to remove encroachments immediately.

Nadeem Akram stated that keeping public roads clear is one of the administration's top priorities to ensure smooth traffic flow and prevent inconvenience to citizens.

He further emphasized that violations of government orders and illegal encroachments would not be tolerated under any circumstances, and strict legal action would be taken against offenders.

Deputy Commissioner Sherani Chairs District Coordination Committee Meeting on Development and Public Issues

SHERANI: An important meeting of the District Coordination Committee was held at the Deputy Commissioner Office in Mani Kiwa under the chairmanship of Hazrat Wali Kakar.

The meeting was attended by heads of all security institutions, district administration officials, and representatives of various government departments.

about the current progress of projects, challenges being faced, and future plans of action.

The meeting also held detailed discussions regarding recently approved BSDI projects to ensure their timely and transparent completion.

Addressing the participants, Deputy Commissioner Hazrat Wali

chairs the meeting, particularly those related to roads, education, healthcare, clean drinking water, electricity, and other basic public facilities.

All concerned institutions were instructed to further strengthen coordination and cooperation to ensure the timely resolution of public problems.

At the conclusion



The main objective of the meeting was to review ongoing development projects, the law and order situation, and public issues in Sherani.

During the meeting, officials from different departments provided a detailed briefing on development projects being carried out under the BSDI (Balochistan Special Development Initiative) program.

Relevant officers informed participants

Kakar directed all departmental officers to ensure quality and transparency in development projects, warning that negligence in public welfare schemes would not be tolerated.

He stated that the district administration is utilizing all available resources to resolve public issues and promote the overall development of the district.

The meeting also reviewed various chal-

lenges faced by the district, particularly those related to roads, education, healthcare, clean drinking water, electricity, and other basic public facilities.

All concerned institutions were instructed to further strengthen coordination and cooperation to ensure the timely resolution of public problems.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Hazrat Wali Kakar reaffirmed the commitment to improving coordination among institutions, maintaining peace and order, and ensuring the timely completion of development projects.

He emphasized that the development of Sherani district and the welfare of its people remain administration's top priorities.

Assistant Commissioner Conducts Surprise Visit to Rural Health Center in Jhal Magsi

JHAL MAGSI: On the special directives of the Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner Umer Khan conducted a surprise late-night visit to the Rural Health Center (RHC) in Jhal Magsi to inspect healthcare facilities and staff performance.

During the visit, the assistant commissioner reviewed the medical services being provided at the hospital, availability of medicines, cleanliness arrangements, and attendance of medical and paramedical staff.

He also inspected various wards and examined healthcare facilities being offered to patients. During the visit, Umer Khan interacted with patients undergoing treatment and inquired about the quality of services and facilities available at the hospital.

Speaking on the occasion, the assistant commissioner directed

the concerned staff to ensure strict attendance and warned that negligence or carelessness in duty would not be tolerated.

He emphasized that timely, quality, and effective healthcare services must be ensured for all patients, especially those coming from remote areas.

The assistant commissioner further stressed that uninterrupted availability of medicines,

the concerned staff to ensure strict attendance and warned that negligence or carelessness in duty would not be tolerated.

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The assistant commissioner further stressed that uninterrupted availability of medicines,

Balochistan Chief Secretary Reviews Monsoon Preparedness, Heatwave Response, and Forest Fire Prevention Plan

QUETTA: An important meeting chaired by Shakeel Qadir Khan was held to review a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan for the upcoming monsoon season, potential urban flooding, forest fires, and heatwave response measures across Balochistan.

The meeting focused on preparedness for monsoon rains, urban flooding, possible flood situations, and forest fire prevention strategies.

During the session, the chief secretary directed all relevant departments to accelerate preparations ahead of the current monsoon season to effectively respond to heavy rainfall, urban flooding, and emergency situations.

He instructed authorities to complete safety and administrative measures in vulnerable areas in a timely manner to ensure swift response to any untoward incidents and forest fires.

Shakeel Qadir Khan emphasized that timely planning, effective coordination, and public awareness could significantly reduce potential losses caused by natural disasters and extreme weather events.

He also appealed to the public to adopt precautionary measures and follow official advisories according to changing weather conditions.

He also ordered the activation of the provincial Heatwave Plan to enable immediate and effective response during periods of extreme heat.

Referring to forest fire incidents reported in recent years in districts such as Sherani, Musa Khel, and Zhoob, the chief secretary directed concerned departments to further strengthen advance arrangements for controlling forest fires.

He instructed officials to ensure preventive measures, including digging trenches to stop the spread of fires and reduce combustible material in affected areas.

The chief secretary also ordered the activation of the provincial Heatwave Plan to enable immediate and effective response during periods of extreme heat.

He directed all commissioners and deputy commissioners to remain on high alert and instructed provincial and district-level institutions to maintain full preparedness in line with weather forecasts and emergency requirements.

Highlighting the severe heat conditions in the Makran, Naserabad, and Dera Bugti belts, he stressed the importance of ensuring the availability of medicines and medical facilities in hospitals during heatwave conditions.

The chief secretary also emphasized intensify-

ing public awareness campaigns in light of climate change and recent heatwave alerts so that citizens can effectively follow precautionary guidelines issued by the government.

During the meeting, the Director General of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) provided a detailed briefing on preparedness measures.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Hamza Shaqqa, Secretary Forest, Secretary Irrigation Sohail ur Rehman Baloch, Secretary Schools Lal Jan Jaffar, Director General Public Relations Askar Khan, DGPDMA, commissioners, and other relevant officials.

Deputy Commissioner Usta Muhammad Reviews BSDI Road Project Following Residents' Concerns

USTAMUHAMMAD: Muhammad Ramzan Palal conducted a detailed visit to the site of an under-construction street project from Ali Gohar Chowk to Mengal Street under the Government of Balochistan's BSDI (Balochistan Special Development Initiative) program.

The visit was carried out after local residents temporarily halted construction work over concerns that the proposed street development could lower the level of a nearby residential house, potentially causing damage to the property.

Residents informed the district administration about the recommendations regarding the project, prompting

immediate intervention by the authorities. Additional Director Local Government Yaseen Jamali also accompanied the deputy commissioner during the visit.

The project had been included in the BSDI development program on the recommendation of Provincial Minister for Live-

stock Faisal Khan Jamali with the objective of improving basic infrastructure and public facilities in the area.

At the site, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ramzan Palal held detailed consultations with officials of relevant departments, engineers, and local residents.

He issued clear di-

rectives to ensure that a balanced and practical solution is developed so that no citizen suffers financial or physical loss while the development work is completed smoothly and without unnecessary delays.

Residents appreciated the district administration for taking immediate notice of the

issue and personally visiting the site to assess the situation. They expressed hope that their concerns would be addressed through an appropriate solution.

Speaking on the occasion, the deputy commissioner stated that the district administration remains fully committed to resolving public issues and ensuring that all development projects prioritize public convenience, safety, and quality standards.

He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to providing improved civic infrastructure while also addressing the legitimate concerns of local residents in a timely manner.

A grid of multiple 'PUBLIC NOTICE' stamps from the Government of Balochistan, Department of Administration, Quetta. Each stamp contains text regarding the appointment of officers and the availability of services at various government offices.

Oil rises after Trump says he is losing patience with Iran

NEWS DESK: Oil prices gained more than 1% after President Donald Trump said he would not be much more patient with Iran and as concerns persisted over ship attacks and seizures despite Tehran saying about 30 vessels had passed through the Strait of Hormuz.

Brent crude oil futures rose \$1.32, or 1.25%, to \$107.04 a barrel by 0425 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate futures were up \$1.33, or 1.31%, to \$102.50.

For the week, Brent has climbed nearly 7%, while WTI has jumped more than 7%, on uncertainty over the shaky ceasefire in the Iran conflict. "I am not going to be much more patient," Trump said in an interview aired on Thursday night on Fox News. "They should make a deal".

US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said on Friday morning that China was being very pragmatic about involvement with Iran, and it was important to



China to have the Strait of Hormuz open, in an interview with Bloomberg. Trump and China's President

Xi Jinping are set to meet on Friday to wrap up a two-day state visit that has featured pomp and busi-

ness deals. "With the Beijing summit not delivering any breakthrough on Iran, market focus is back on

the deadlock and a blocked Strait, with a tail risk of renewed military escalation," said Vandana Hari,

founder of oil market analysis provider Vanda Insights. Among the deals the market was looking

out for from the summit, Trump said China wants to buy oil from the United States. In incidents

around the Strait of Hormuz, a ship was reported seized by Iranian personnel off the United Arab Emirates and headed for Iranian waters on Thursday, and an Indian cargo vessel carrying livestock from Africa to the UAE was sunk on Wednesday in waters off the coast of Oman.

The White House said Trump and Xi had agreed on the need to keep the shipping lane open.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said 30 vessels had crossed the Strait of Hormuz since Wednesday evening, still far short of 140 that were typical daily before the war, but a substantial increase if confirmed.

Yang An, analyst at Haitong Futures, said the main driver of oil prices was still tight supply. "Oil prices swung several times yesterday but still closed near the day's high," he said.

"Ships passing through the strait eased some market concerns, but not enough to change the strong trend driven by tight supply".

Indian magnate Adani agrees to multi-million-dollar penalty in United State (US) court case

NEWS DESK: Indian billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani has agreed to pay a multi-million-dollar settlement in a US civil court case linked to corruption without admitting guilt, his company said on Friday.

The November 2024 indictment in New York accused the industrialist and multiple subordinates of deliberately misleading international investors as part of a vast bribery scheme.

Adani was accused of having participated in an estimated \$250 million scheme to bribe Indian officials for lucrative solar energy supply contracts.

Adani, along with his nephew Sagar Adani, agreed to the "payment of a civil penalty" totalling \$18 million, while noting that it came "without admitting or denying the allegations made in the civil complaint," a letter from Adani Green Energy to the Mumbai

stock exchange read. The penalty payment comes as US prosecutors are reported to be set to drop charges against Adani.

The New York Times reported on Thursday. The Adani letter, which noted that the final judgement of the US court is still awaited, stressed that the "company is not a party to this proceeding, and no charges have been brought against it."

The New York Times said the move to abandon the charges, brought under US

president Joe Biden's administration, came after Adani hired a new legal team led by Robert Giuffra, one of President Donald Trump's personal lawyers. With a business empire spanning coal, airports, cement and media, the chairman of Adani Group has been rocked in recent years by corporate fraud allegations and a stock crash.

Adani, a close ally of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was born in Ahmedabad in Gujarat state to a middle-class

family but dropped out of school at 16. He moved to India's financial capital, Mumbai, to find work in the city's lucrative gem trade.

In 1988, after a short stint in his brother's plastics business, he launched the flagship family conglomerate that bears his name by branching out into the export trade.

His big break came seven years later with a contract to build and operate a commercial shipping port in Gujarat.



IMF highlights 'Gulf exposure' as biggest external risk for Pakistan

NEWS DESK: Following the release of a \$1.1 billion tranche for Pakistan, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has identified Pakistan's economic exposure to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as its most acute external vulnerability.

In its staff report, the lender warned that "the war weighs on the near-term outlook as Pakistan is highly exposed to energy imports and remittances from the Gulf countries as well as to global financial conditions".

According to the report, 81 per cent of Pakistan's fuel imports originate in the GCC region, while 55pc of remittances — equivalent to about nine percent of the GDP — flow from these economies.

The IMF noted: "A significant disruption to the GCC economies and/or return of migrant workers could weigh on these flows, a major source of financing for consumption and the balance of payments". According to the



Fund, the Iran war's impact has been formally embedded in Pakistan's macroeconomic projections. Under the IMF's baseline scenario, GDP growth is expected to slow by 0.2 percentage points in FY26 and 0.6 points in FY27, while inflation is pushed up by approximately half a percentage point this year and one and a half points in FY27.

On Pakistan's fiscal performance, the report found that programme targets were met, but flagged that the gains were driven by expenditure restraint rather than revenue growth.

"The consolidation progress so far has relied primarily on increasing revenue from the formal sector," the report stated, noting that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) missed its end-December indicative target by 0.3pc of the GDP.

Energy pricing was listed among the prior actions required to complete the review. The government had temporarily delayed fuel price increases after the war began, providing a subsidy to oil marketing companies.

Additionally, the IMF has formally incorporated the country's court-man-

dated transition to an interest-free banking system into its programme monitoring.

The report said the government's financial strategy must provide "a detailed roadmap for the transition to a constitutionally mandated 'riba' (interest) free economy" and that "the strategy should establish, without ambiguity, the implementation trajectory for financial institutions and the approach to addressing outstanding conventional liabilities".

The strategy is required as a structural benchmark by end-June 2026.

Kerosene, jet fuel prices frozen for forces

NEWS DESK: As kerosene oil and jet fuel where rates stood on March 1, 2026. The refineries agreed to meet the requirements of Pakistan's armed forces and Hajj flight operations.

The refineries have kept prices of kerosene oil and jet fuels at levels prevailing on March 1, 2026. Sources told The Express Tribune that oil refineries would bear a loss of around Rs8 billion due to the provision of fuels at discounted rates.

They said that the government had informed the refineries that it needed oil at lower prices; therefore, they should set prices of

the discussion held on pricing of SKO, JP-1 and JP-8 in NCMC meetings and follow-up discussions with CEOs/MDs of refineries held on May 11, 2026 at the Petroleum Division and local refineries have agreed to supply SKO and JP-8 fuels to the armed forces/Air Force at prices prevailing on March 1, 2026 for Hajj flights only.

The said arrangement is for the remaining months of the current financial year, till June 30, 2026, the Petroleum Division said in a letter to the chief executive officers (CEOs) of oil refineries.

Pakistan Army is a key user of kerosene oil, which is consumed in remote areas of the northern part. Owing to the US-Iran war, the prices of jet fuel have jumped, resulting in a crisis across the world. Even some airlines have shut down their operations. Pakistan has also faced these oil shocks as prices of petrol and diesel have crossed the Rs400-per-litre mark, affecting the daily life of consumers and resulting in an in-

crease in inflation.

Pakistan has been spending heavily on the import of petroleum products for decades as 80% of its oil needs are met through imports from the Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait.

Kuwait has recently resumed supplies of diesel to Pakistan to rescue it from the looming oil crisis due to tensions in the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia is also a key supplier of oil to Pakistan, which is providing products on deferred payments.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has recently warned that Pakistan's oil import bill has jumped from \$300 million to \$800 million in just a week's time.



Cotton prices surge as season starts early

NEWS DESK: The national cotton sector has entered a new phase with the new ginning season beginning in the second week of May for the first time in history. Cotton arrivals have started in Punjab and Sindh,

and prices of phutti and lint are witnessing an unusual surge at the very outset of the season.

Four ginning factories in Khairwal and one in Burewala started cotton ginning over the past two days after partial cotton picking began in Sindh's coastal areas.

Punjab-based ginners started purchas-

ing cotton from those areas where early advance was carried out in February on a larger scale than in previous years.

One ginning factory each in Sanghar and Tando Adam also started purchasing cotton, and these factories were expected to become fully operational within the next few days.

According to Cotton Gimmers Forum chairman Mr Haq, the beginning of the new season has already triggered sharp increases in cotton and lint prices.

Advanced deals for phutti initially ranged between

Rs10,000 and Rs10,500 per 40 kilograms, while advance deals for lint were settled at around Rs21,700 per maund.

However, current reports suggest that phutti deals are now being finalised at up to Rs11,600 per 40 kilograms, while lint prices have climbed to Rs22,500 per maund. Some market sources said lint deals were even being struck at Rs23,000 per maund.

He said reports of lint deals reaching as high as Rs23,500 per maund had further strengthened expectations of a continued bullish trend in cotton

and lint prices.

Mr Haq said the early start of the cotton ginning season would help textile mills overcome the problem of limited lint availability as fresh supplies begin reaching the market ahead of schedule.

Traditionally, Pakistan's cotton ginning season used to start in June. During cotton year 2025-26, the season started in the third week of May, which itself was considered historic.

However, this year the season has begun even earlier, marking the first-ever start in the second week of May.

Sinner breaks Masters 1000 winning streak record at Italian Open

NEWS DESK: Jannik Sinner reached the semi-finals of the Italian Open on Thursday after seeing off Andrey Rublev and establishing a new record of consecutive wins in Masters 1000 tournaments.

Another straight-sets victory, this time 6-2, 6-4 over Rublev, moved Sinner up to 32 straight wins in the ATP's top-ranked events, one more than the previous record established by Novak Djokovic in 2011.

"I don't play for records, I play just for my own story," said Sinner on court. "At the same time, it means a lot to me, but tomorrow is another day, another opponent, a different opponent."

Rublev was Sinner's first seeded opponent at this year's tournament in Rome and the world number one made short work of his task in front of a delighted centre court.

On Friday, Sinner could face Daniil Medvedev, winner of the 2023 title at the Foro Italico, with the seventh seed taking on lucky loser Martin Landaluce in the first match of the evening session, which is scheduled to start at 17:00GMT.

PSG clinch fifth straight Ligue 1 title

NEWS DESK: Paris Saint-Germain secured their fifth straight French Ligue 1 title on Wednesday as Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's strike set up a decisive 2-0 win away to nearest rivals RC Lens.

The Georgian netted his 19th goal of the season just before the half-hour mark and substitute Ibrahim Mbaye added a late second as PSG took an unassailable nine-point lead at the top with one match of the season remaining.

PSG boss Luis Enrique said that his team showed they had the mentality to win games even when they are on the back foot.

"Today, we spent more time defending than usual," said Luis Enrique. "But if you want to win trophies, you have to be able to dominate both offensively and defensively. And the team today showed the mentality it needs to win."

"This is the sweetest and hardest title to win. The hardest of the three years we've had here, without a doubt. But that's also because Lens did a very good job," the Spanish manager added.

PSG have now won a record 14 French titles overall with 12 of them coming in the last 14 years, a period in which

they have been second team in the modern era in the French Cup.

Rublev offered little resistance, the Russian dropping his own serve in the first game of both sets to give Sinner a handy leg-up, and committing 28 unforced errors in 18 games.

Sinner meanwhile showed flashes of his best tennis but also started to look tired towards the end of the match.

"I'm starting to feel that I've been playing a lot, so I need to recover as much as possible because tomorrow will be very difficult," Sinner later told reporters.

"However it goes it will be a win for me, if I win great but even if things don't go well that's OK because I'll have a few more days to prepare for Paris which is my main objective this year."

Gauff in quarter-finals in Stuttgart. But she dealt with Romanian Cristea — who is set to retire at the end of the year — professionally as Spring sunshine burst out on centre court, helped by a marked improvement in her often erratic service game.

The 24-year-old quarter-finals in Stuttgart. But she dealt with Romanian Cristea — who is set to retire at the end of the year — professionally as Spring sunshine burst out on centre court, helped by a marked improvement in her often erratic service game.

The American star has struggled on clay this season, with a last-16 exit in the Madrid Open coming after a disappointing run to the



the second team in the modern era in the French Cup. Rublev offered little resistance, the Russian dropping his own serve in the first game of both sets to give Sinner a handy leg-up, and committing 28 unforced errors in 18 games. Sinner meanwhile showed flashes of his best tennis but also started to look tired towards the end of the match. "I'm starting to feel that I've been playing a lot, so I need to recover as much as possible because tomorrow will be very difficult," Sinner later told reporters. "However it goes it will be a win for me, if I win great but even if things don't go well that's OK because I'll have a few more days to prepare for Paris which is my main objective this year." Gauff in quarter-finals in Stuttgart. But she dealt with Romanian Cristea — who is set to retire at the end of the year — professionally as Spring sunshine burst out on centre court, helped by a marked improvement in her often erratic service game. The 24-year-old quarter-finals in Stuttgart. But she dealt with Romanian Cristea — who is set to retire at the end of the year — professionally as Spring sunshine burst out on centre court, helped by a marked improvement in her often erratic service game.

Blistering Eyman Fatima helps Pakistan seal Zimbabwe T20 series

NEWS DESK: A sparkling unbeaten innings from Eyman Fatima guided Pakistan to a dominant 67-run victory over Zimbabwe in the second T20 International at the National Bank Stadium on Thursday night, helping the hosts clinch the three-match series with one game remaining.

After being put into bat, Pakistan recovered from an uncertain start to post an imposing 170-4, thanks largely to Eyman's blistering 79 not out off only 43 balls.

Pakistan's top order struggled to gain momentum early on as Gull Feroza departed for nine and Ayesha Zafar was run out for four, leaving the hosts at 35-2 in the seventh over.

Veteran batter Muneeba Ali attempted to steady the innings with 33 deliveries, striking four boundaries before being dismissed for 18.

She found solid support from Natalia Pervaz, who remained unbeaten on 24 off 19 balls, as the pair added an unbroken 78-run partnership for the fifth wicket to lift Pakistan to a commanding total.

By then, however, Eyman had begun to take control. The right-hander unleashed a series of crisp strokes all around the ground, punishing Zimbabwe's bowlers with 10 fours and four sixes in an innings played at a strike rate of over 183.

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Canadian football ready for World Cup

NEWS DESK: Exactly 150 years after Carlton Cricket Club and Ontario Lacrosse first took part in the first recorded organised football match in Canada in 1876, Canadian soccer is finally ready for its coming of age.

When Canada faces Bosnia-Herzegovina on June 12 in the team's first ever World Cup match on home soil, it will be the latest step on a decades-long journey of development that has seen football gain a solid foothold in a sporting landscape dominated by ice hockey.

Already the largest participatory sport in Canada with nearly 10 million registered players, the 2026 World Cup is set to deliver another jolt of momentum to the country's rapidly emerging football scene.

Canada will host 13 matches — six in Toronto, seven in Vancouver — with Canada also facing Qatar and Switzerland in Group B.

In two previous appearances at the World Cup — the 1986 finals in Mexico and the 2002 tournament in Qatar — Canada has compiled a perfect record of futility: played six and lost six.

Yet Canada's American coach Jesse Marsch insists that the tournament co-hosts aren't just making the most of their own party.

"We want to win the World Cup," Marsch said in an interview last year. "That may sound ridiculous, but why would we go into any tournament at any time and think, 'Yeah, let's see how we do, and maybe we get one win. Or can we score a goal?'"

Marsch said that kind of thinking was Canadian football's "dialogue in the past."

"Love of the team" But with a group of players which is often stunted in Doha with losses to Belgium and eventual semi-finalists Croatia and Morocco, they impressed on the world stage in 2024 at the Copa America, with a surprise run to the semi-finals where they were defeated by world champions Argentina.

Many of Canada's likely World Cup starting line-up have their roots in the country's immigrant diaspora. They were defeated by world champions Argentina. Many of Canada's likely World Cup starting line-up have their roots in the country's immigrant diaspora. They were defeated by world champions Argentina.



Just as soccer in the United States gained a valuable boost from the success of the men's team at the 1994 World Cup, Canadian officials are hoping that a pro-longed campaign by Canada this year will also reap long-term rewards for the sport.

England drop Zak Crawley for first Test against New Zealand

NEWS DESK: England have dropped struggling opener Zak Crawley from their squad for next month's first Test against New Zealand at Lord's as they begin rebuilding following a dismal 4-1 Ashes defeat in Australia.

Durham batsman Emilio Gay, one of three uncapped players named in the 15-man squad alongside Hampshire fast bowler Sonny Baker and Somerset wicket-keeper-batsman James Ray, is poised to replace Crawley at the top of the order.

Paceman Ollie Robinson has also returned after more than two years out of the side, while left-spinner Rehan Ahmed has been recalled. Crawley scored only 273 runs in 10 innings at an average of 27.30 during England's disappointing 2025-26 Ashes campaign and has continued to struggle for form with Kent this season.

It is the first time since captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum took charge of the Test side in 2022 that Crawley has been omitted from a squad

while available for selection. England could hand debut to as many as three players in the opening Test of the three-match series starting at Lord's on June 4.

The recall of Robinson is also significant, with England searching for a reliable new-ball spearhead following the retirements of James Anderson, Stuart Broad and Chris Woakes.

Despite concerns over fitness and attitude, the Sussex fast bowler boasts an impressive Test record of 76 wickets at an average of 22.92 in 20 matches. He last played for England in February 2024. Gay, 26, has enjoyed a prolific county season for Durham, scoring 522 runs, including three centuries, at an average of 89.2.

Ray, 22, is expected to provide batting cover and serve as back-up wicket-keeper to Jamie Smith.

Ahmed, who became England's youngest men's Test cricketer in Pakistan in 2022 aged 18, joins Shaoh-Bashir as the two specialist

spinners in the squad. North, currently Durham's director of cricket, succeeds Luke Wright and will work alongside Stokes, white-ball captain Harry Brook and England managing director Rob Key described the squad as an "exciting blend" of proven international performers and players rewarded for strong county form.

Emilio James and Sonny have all earned their opportunities through consistent performances and have impressed as not only with their talent, but with the way they've gone about their cricket in high-pressure situations," said former England batsman Key.

"It's also great to welcome back players like Rehan, Matt and Ollie, who all bring different qualities and experience to the group."

Tremendous honour for selector North. "I'm looking forward to working closely with the counties in identifying, supporting and selecting players who can thrive at international level."

North, who played for Australia and is now set to help shape England's squad for next year's Ashes series on home soil, added: "The opportunity to help shape the future of England men's teams is one I'm incredibly passionate about."

Canadian football ready for World Cup

NEWS DESK: Exactly 150 years after Carlton Cricket Club and Ontario Lacrosse first took part in the first recorded organised football match in Canada in 1876, Canadian soccer is finally ready for its coming of age.

When Canada faces Bosnia-Herzegovina on June 12 in the team's first ever World Cup match on home soil, it will be the latest step on a decades-long journey of development that has seen football gain a solid foothold in a sporting landscape dominated by ice hockey.

Already the largest participatory sport in Canada with nearly 10 million registered players, the 2026 World Cup is set to deliver another jolt of momentum to the country's rapidly emerging football scene.

Canada will host 13 matches — six in Toronto, seven in Vancouver — with Canada also facing Qatar and Switzerland in Group B.

In two previous appearances at the World Cup — the 1986 finals in Mexico and the 2002 tournament in Qatar — Canada has compiled a perfect record of futility: played six and lost six.

Yet Canada's American coach Jesse Marsch insists that the tournament co-hosts aren't just making the most of their own party.

"We want to win the World Cup," Marsch said in an interview last year. "That may sound ridiculous, but why would we go into any tournament at any time and think, 'Yeah, let's see how we do, and maybe we get one win. Or can we score a goal?'"

Marsch said that kind of thinking was Canadian football's "dialogue in the past."

"Love of the team" But with a group of players which is often stunted in Doha with losses to Belgium and eventual semi-finalists Croatia and Morocco, they impressed on the world stage in 2024 at the Copa America, with a surprise run to the semi-finals where they were defeated by world champions Argentina.

Many of Canada's likely World Cup starting line-up have their roots in the country's immigrant diaspora. They were defeated by world champions Argentina. Many of Canada's likely World Cup starting line-up have their roots in the country's immigrant diaspora. They were defeated by world champions Argentina.

Just as soccer in the United States gained a valuable boost from the success of the men's team at the 1994 World Cup, Canadian officials are hoping that a pro-longed campaign by Canada this year will also reap long-term rewards for the sport.

"A long run in the tournament that's compelling" will create viewership demand for soccer going forward, in all forms," Canada Soccer chief executive Kevin Blue said.

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Pak-US ties have strengthened during Trump's tenure, Naqvi says in meeting with American official

NEWS DESK: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday said that Pak-US ties had strengthened during United States President Donald Trump's tenure.

He made the remarks during a meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Paul Kapur, the interior ministry said in a post on the social media platform X. The meeting was also attended by US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, and other officials.

"During the meeting, discussions took place on Pakistan-US relations and the latest situation in the Middle East," the ministry said. It added that views were also exchanged on increasing cooperation in the fields of security, counter-terrorism, and combating narcotics.

"Pakistan-US relations have strengthened during Trump's



tenure," the ministry quoted Naqvi as saying.

"Pak-US relations are based on mutual trust and bilateral co-

operation," Naqvi said, adding foolproof security had been ensured for American companies working on the Reko Diq project.

According to the ministry, Naqvi said the country "wanted direct flights between Pakistan and the US soon".

"We are hopeful for a lasting and peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict," he added. On Thursday,

Kapur had also met with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

"During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on bilateral relations and regional developments," the Foreign Office (FO) said. According to the

statement, Dar appreciated Trump's "vision for peace, the Iran-US ceasefire understanding, and the visit of US Vice President JD Vance to Pakistan".

"He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to resolving issues through dialogue and diplomacy," it said.

"Expressing satisfaction over the current momentum in Pakistan-US relations, Dar welcomed growing engagement between the two countries and the expansion of cooperation across multiple fields. He also underscored the importance of regular high-level exchanges and sustained structured dialogue," it said.

Meanwhile, Kapur appreciated Pakistan's role in regional mediation and noted the positive trajectory in bilateral relations.

"Both sides agreed to further strengthen collaboration in trade, investment, and development," the FO said.

Probe shows foreigners' involvement in network run by alleged drug queenpin Anmol alias Pinky: Karachi AIG

NEWS DESK: Karachi Additional Inspector General (AIG) Azad Khan shared details on Friday of probe against alleged queenpin Anmol alias Pinky, saying that investigators had come across information regarding the involvement of foreigners in running the drug network.

Anmol had been arrested earlier this week from her apartment in Karachi in a joint raid conducted by police and a civilian intelligence agency in connection with two cases pertaining to the possession of narcotics and an unlicensed weapon.

On Wednesday, a court in Karachi granted police her three-day physical remand.

The Karachi AIG shared details during a press conference on Friday of the investigation conducted against Anmol thus far.

saying that the case could turn out to be a transnational one as investigators had come across information about the involvement of foreigners in the drugs networks allegedly run by the suspect.

"We have come across information that some foreigners from African countries are involved in this network who are in Lahore. They may be six to eight in number."

"Similarly, some Lahore-based women are also involved in this network," he said. The official said 20 cases against Anmol had surfaced in Sindh, in which 17 were old cases and three were registered recently. "One of those cases is registered with the Anti-Narcotics Force."

Moreover, three cases against her were registered in Lahore, he said, adding that further details

about the status of those cases had been sought.

The AIG said Anmol had been shown as arrested in nine cases, and she had been acquitted in six of the old cases registered against her. "She has been declared a proclaimed offender in three cases and an absconder in the ANF case," he added.

Separately, nine cases registered previously were linked to her network, he said, adding that "her riders are nominated in those cases, but her name was not mentioned in the cases when they were registered".

AIG Khan said Anmol had been involved in drug peddling since 2014, but she began selling drugs in Karachi in 2018. "She used to do it online and when she came on [the authorities'] radar here, she moved to Lahore," he added.

One interaction cannot be viewed in isolation, says PPP's Shazia Marri after Bilawal's mid-presser curtness

NEWS DESK: PPP MNA and spokesperson Shazia Marri said on Friday that one instance of interaction between two people who had worked closely for several years "cannot be viewed in isolation" after a video clip of PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari curtness with her went viral on social media.

The incident took place at a press conference after the PPP's parliamentary meeting at the Parliament House in Islamabad on Thursday.

During the press briefing, a journalist asked Bilawal for his views on ministers in

the federal government suggesting that education, health and other subjects, particularly the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) be given back to the Centre under a proposed 28th constitutional amendment.

Several subjects, including education and health, were devolved to the provinces under the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010.

Bilawal began his reply by stating that he was not aware which federal minister the journalist was referring to.

At that point, Marri, who was also present at the press conference, corrected

him, stating that it was not a federal minister but Minister of State for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Kesoo Mal Kheal Das.

Das was reported to have said last week, while speaking to reporters, that the government was considering devolving BISP to provinces.

After Marri's mention of him, Bilawal responded by saying, "I am not asking you."

At that, Marri began apologising, but Bilawal interjected and said, "Thank you."

As a video clip of the interaction went viral on social media, Marri seemingly addressed the matter in

a post on X.

"One interaction that made its way on social media between people who have worked closely together for many years cannot be viewed in isolation. PPP has always prioritised the collective good of the people and nothing should take away from our joint mission of public service," she said.

Her post was in response to another, which pointed out that the entire coverage of the presser had diverted to that "one instance".

Meanwhile, digital rights expert and activist Usama Khilji said, "For a hardworking, senior

and one of the few directly elected women politicians in the parliament to be spoken to with such condescending misogyny publicly is not a good message from the party that gave the Muslim world its first woman prime minister."

He also called on Bilawal to apologise.

Imtiaz Gul, the executive director of Islamabad-based think tank Centre for Research and Security Studies, said, "Quite an embarrassing moment for a senior leader like Marri and an extremely poor reflection on Bilawal, who showed the wadera arrogance by giving her a shut up call."



PM Shehbaz lauds 'historic' Pak-China ties in meeting with Chinese business delegation

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday lauded the "historic" ties between Pakistan and China during a meeting with a Chinese business delegation.

According to a handout from the Prime Minister's Office, a high-level 11-member Chinese business delegation led by Qian Xiaojun, the founder, president and controlling shareholder of IBI Beijing United Technology, called on the premier.

"While welcoming the delegation to Pakistan, the prime minister said Pakistan and China enjoyed historic ties and the two countries were

all-weather strategic cooperative partners," the handout said.

He lauded the remarkable progress made by China under the visionary leadership of President Xi Jinping and said that he was looking forward to his visit to China later this month, it added. The prime minister welcomed the growing business-to-business engagement between the two countries and said it was particularly encouraging that IBI would promote digital economy cooperation, investment facilitation and industrial collaboration, it said.

Expressing confidence in Pakistan's

economy, Xiaojun said IBI hoped to help build the backbone for the digital transformation of Pakistan's economy.

He said the establishment of IBI's Digital Economy headquarters in Pakistan would be the command centre for this transformation and would provide massive opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises in Pakistan by offering a gateway for them to a vast Chinese market.

The delegation's visit followed the Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference held in Beijing in September 2025 during the prime minister's visit to China.



9 terrorists killed, 4 security personnel martyred as attack on army camp in Bajaur repulsed: sources

NEWS DESK: Security forces killed nine terrorists as they repulsed an attack on an army camp in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district, official sources said on Friday.

Four security personnel were also martyred during the engagement, they added.

The sources said terrorists from Fitna-al-Khawari — the state-designated terrorist organisation banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) — attacked the camp with explosives on Thursday night and tried to end the camp from one of the gates while firing.

But security forces responded timely and effectively, as a result of which they remained unsuccessful in their various designs, the sources added.



They said that according to initial reports, nine terrorists had been killed and four soldiers

were martyred during the engagement. The terrorists were unable to enter the camp despite using explosives and resorting to intense firing, they said, adding that a search and clearance operation was underway at the camp. Meanwhile, injured

security personnel had been taken to Peshawar for medical treatment, they said.

The TTP claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement. The attack has taken place just three days after a blast in KP's Lakki Marwat claimed

the lives of nine people, including two traffic policemen. Over 30 people were also injured in the attack. Prior to that, 15 police personnel were martyred after a suicide

attack on the Fateh Khel police post in KP's Bannu district on May 9. KP has seen a rise

in terrorist attacks in the past year. According to the Annual Security Report 2025 from the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), KP recorded a significant surge in violence last year as "fatalities rose from 1,620 in 2024 to 2,331 in 2025".