



Aurangzeb to lead panel on OMCs' Rs72bn windfall profits



Prince Rahim Aga Khan concludes Pakistan visit



Pak-China youth coop opens 'new phase' of opportunity: Rana Mashood

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Hajj sermon urges Muslims to uphold patience, unity and devotion to Allah

PEAK POINT

MAKKAH: Muslims were urged to remain patient during hardships and strengthen their devotion to Allah during the Hajj sermon delivered at Namirah Mosque in Arafat on Tuesday. Sheikh Ali Al Hudaify delivered the Hajj Khutbah before millions of pilgrims gathered in the plains of Arafat. Following the sermon, pilgrims offered combined and shortened Zuhr and Asr prayers. Addressing the congregation, Sheikh Al Hudaify called on Muslims to adopt piety and fulfil their commitments. "O people, fear Allah, for by it the servant attains salvation in his Hereafter," he said during the sermon. He stressed that true preparation for the Hereafter lies in monotheism and sincere worship. "The

greatest preparation for the Hereafter is through monotheism and the worship of Allah alone, and abandoning the supplication to anyone other than Him," he said. The imam also reminded worshippers that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the final messenger of Allah and urged Muslims to adhere to truthfulness while avoiding falsehood, backbiting and religious innovations. Highlighting the spiritual and social significance of Hajj, Sheikh Al Hudaify said the pilgrimage reflects unity and solidarity among Muslims from across the world. "In Hajj, the manifestations of mutual acquaintance, harmony, cooperation, and solidarity among the people of Islam become evident," he said.



Sheikh Dr Ali Al Hudaify, th Imam of Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, is delivering a Hajj sermon at Namirah Mosque in Makkah.

DPM Dar arrives in New York to attend high-level UNSC debate

PEAK POINT



NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar arrived in New York to attend a high-level United Nations Security Council (UNSC) debate, the Foreign Office (FO)

said on Tuesday. In a post on the social media platform X, the FO said that Dar will attend the debate, which was being convened under China's presidency of the UNSC. "He will also hold bilateral meetings with his counterparts, as well as senior UN officials," it said. It said that upon arrival, Dar was received by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad and Consul General of Pakistan in New York Aamer Ahmad Atozai. The FO had earlier stated that Dar was also scheduled to attend a meeting of the Group of Friends on Global Governance during his visit from May 26-28. Chinese officials have said the debate on "Upholding the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter and Strengthening the UN-Centred International System" aims to reinforce the relevance of the UN Charter, strengthen the authority of the UNSC, and promote multilateral diplomacy at a time of increasing global instability. Beijing has also warned that rising geopolitical turbulence.

PM Shehbaz seeks Chinese support to transform Pakistan's agriculture sector

PEAK POINT



BEIJING: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called for a major transformation of Pakistan's agriculture sector through enhanced cooperation with China, proposing that the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) take a leading role in revitalizing Pakistan's agricultural research institutions and modernizing farming practices. Addressing a workshop on Pakistan-China agricultural cooperation during his visit to the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Beijing, the prime minister said Pakistan and China's "iron-clad brotherhood" was entering a new era of economic transformation, particularly in agriculture, research, innovation and rural development. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked CAAS President Professor Dr. Huang Sanwen and the faculty for conferring upon him an honorary professorship, saying the distinction was not only an honour for him but for the entire Pakistani nation. "This year we are celebrating the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. This occasion gives us inspiration and encouragement that together we will transform this iron-clad friendship into a great economic revolution in industry, agriculture, research and development, and other strategic areas," he said. The prime minister described agriculture as the backbone of Pakistan's economy and stressed that modern research innovation and technology were essential for achieving economic independence and empowering the country's youth.

Iran supreme leader says regional nations will 'no longer be shields' for US bases

PEAK POINT



IRAN: Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei said in a statement on Tuesday that nations in the Middle East would "no longer

serve as shields for US bases". Mojtaba, who has not appeared publicly since being named as the supreme leader on March 8, made these remarks in his Haj message and hours after the US carried out fresh strikes in Iran despite a fragile ceasefire and the two sides engaging in negotiations for a deal to end the almost three-month-long war.

"The hands of time will not turn back, and the nations and lands of the region will no longer serve as shields for US bases," the supreme leader said in his message, which was shared on his X account and reported by Iranian media. He said that the US "will no longer have a safe haven for its mischief and for establishing military bases in the region", adding that it was "growing more distant from its former status day by day". "The future belongs to the Muslim ummah and the new Islamic civilisation," he said.

UN chief, OIC condemn deadly attack on Pakistan train

PEAK POINT

LONDON: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has condemned an attack on a train in Pakistan that killed more than dozen people.

In a statement posted on X platform by spokesmen Stephane Dujarric, Antonio Guterres "condemns the explosion targeting a train in Pakistan's Balochistan province. He extends his deepest condolences to the families of those killed and wishes a swift recovery to those injured."

"The Secretary-General reiterates that terrorism in all its forms,

Australia-India-Japan-US Quad to build a port, unveil pact on critical minerals

PEAK POINT

AUSTRALIA: The foreign ministers of Australia, India, Japan and the US agreed to jointly build a port in Fiji and signed pacts covering critical minerals and energy security, as they sought to inject fresh energy into the grouping. The brief meeting between the countries' top diplomats — Australia's Penny Wong, India's S Jaishankar, Japan's Toshimitsu Motegi and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio — was the third such gathering of the group known as Quad since September 2024. The Quad meeting came as the US and Iran have been circling around a possible deal to end their three-month conflict and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. The group



unveiled its first joint infrastructure project, a port in Fiji.

"We are going to be partnering on issues of port infrastructure, in particular in response to insufficient port capacity in the Pacific Islands, we are announcing plans to work with Fiji," Rubio said, adding that the initiative would be "a practical demonstration of our collective ability to deliver high-quality, resilient infrastructure".

The four-nation group had lost some momentum

last year after failing to hold a leaders' summit, amid tensions between US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi over Washington's tariffs and other matters.

"We are beginning to show real achievements and real accomplishments," Rubio said. "We are deeply committed to this partnership. It is a linchpin and a cornerstone of our global strategy as a nation in the US." He said the group agreed to launch an initiative on Indo-

Pacific Energy Security and a critical minerals framework.

The minerals framework will guide how to leverage economic policy tools and coordinate investment to strengthen critical minerals supply chains — including in mining and processing — and in critical minerals recycling, Rubio said.

The initiative could be significant for Japan after China halted shipments of some minerals used in aerospace, defence and semiconductor industries following a diplomatic dispute. Previous Quad meetings have put forward initiatives to maintain "the free and open maritime order" in the Indo-Pacific by improving information gathering on what is happening in their waters.

Pak-China relations at their strongest point, continue to grow from strength to strength: Masood Khan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States and China, and former Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Sardar Masood Khan said Monday that Pakistan and China have built an extraordinary relationship over the past seventy-five years that has emerged as one of the strongest and most resilient bilateral partnerships in the world.

Commenting on the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, Ambassador Masood Khan stated that the relationship between the two countries had evolved from strategic cooperation during the Cold War into a comprehensive partnership encompassing diplomacy, trade, defence, technology, connectivity, and regional stability. He remarked that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China carries immense significance because it focuses on three key dimensions including strengthening strategic and economic cooperation, commemorating the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations, and consulting on rapidly evolving regional developments, particularly the tensions involving Iran, Israel, and the United States.





SPORTS



Football unites nations at world football day event in Islamabad



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Football Federation XI produced an impressive performance to defeat United Nations (UN) XI 3-1 in a vibrant exhibition match held to celebrate World Football Day at the Jinnah Stadium, Islamabad.

The event which organised by Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) brought together diplomats, football personalities, and international representatives to promote

the message of peace, unity, and guests.

The exhibition match was attended by United Nations Pakistan Resident Coordinator Mohamed Yahya, diplomats from France, Romania, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Pakistan Football Federation President Syed Mohsin Gilani, Pakistan football team head coach Nolberto Solano, former Pakistan captain Essa Khan and several other distinguished

brotherhood through sports. PFF XI dominated the contest with Shahzad scoring twice, while Essa Khan added another goal to seal the victory. Nnu Gibson scored the lone goal for the UN XI. Speaking on the occasion, Mohamed Yahya said Pakistan possesses immense football talent and the United Nations would continue supporting efforts for the promotion and development of football in the country.

PFF President Syed Mohsin Gilani said football is rapidly growing in Pakistan and the federation is committed to creating more opportunities for young players and taking the game to every corner of the country.

The World Football Day celebration concluded with a strong message that sports are not merely a source of entertainment, but also a powerful tool to promote peace, friendship, and global harmony.

Australia captain Mitchell Marsh ruled out of ODI series against Pakistan



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Australia suffered a big blow ahead of the upcoming three-match one-day international (ODI) series against Pakistan as captain Mitchell Marsh was ruled out with an ankle injury.

Wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis will lead the Australian side in Pakistan in the absence of Marsh.

Marsh, who also missed the final match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) season with Lucknow Super Giants, will remain in Perth for treatment and further medical assessment.

Cricket Australia (CA) confirmed that a decision on his availability for the upcoming Bangladesh white-ball tour will be made at a later stage.

The three-match ODI series between Pakistan and Australia is scheduled from May 30 to June 4. The opening fixture will be played in Rawalpindi, while the remaining two matches will take place at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium. In a further development, Australia are expected to hand an international debut to emerging pacer Ollie Peake as they adjust their squad in Marsh's absence. This series marks Australia's return to Pakistan for a 50-over bilateral tour since their last ODI visit in March-April 2022.

Mike Hesson defends selection decisions as Pakistan eye World Cup build-up



PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's white-ball head coach Mike Hesson on Monday defended the team management's recent selection decisions and insisted the national side was making "real good progress" in limited-overs cricket despite

criticism following a turbulent few months for Pakistan cricket. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the national training camp at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium ahead of the upcoming three-match ODI series against Australia, Hesson said Pakistan's white-ball

setup should not be judged through the lens of the national team's struggles in the past year and other formats.

Pakistan host Australia in Rawalpindi and Lahore from May 30 to June 4 in a series of white-ball cricket," he said. "We've made really good progress in the last 12 months."

"Most of the players weren't even involved in red-ball cricket," Hesson said when asked whether recent Test setbacks had affected morale in the ODI camp. "We've been training in Lahore for the last 10 days, played a number of warm-up games and have been very much focused on this series."

The former New Zealand coach said Pakistan had shown encouraging signs in white-ball cricket over the past year and stressed that performances in one format should not dictate perceptions in another.

"There's confidence in terms of our white-ball cricket," he said. "We've made really good progress in the last 12 months."

Hesson also responded to criticism surrounding the omission of wicket-keeper Mohammad Rizwan from the ODI camp, clarifying that the move was part of a broader attempt to assess combinations ahead of the next World Cup cycle.

Pakistan recently named a 16-member squad for the Australia series led by Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Sindh and Karachi basketball bodies honour Hassan Naqvi



Iran says FIFA promised players will get World Cup visas

PEAK POINT

TEHRAN: Iran's sports minister said FIFA has promised the country's men's football team will receive visas to play in the United States at the World Cup this summer despite the ongoing Middle East war, local media reported on Monday.

Iran's participation at the global spectacle has been in question for months because it is being co-hosted by the US, which along with Israel began bombing Iran on February 28, sparking a wider regional war.

"The FIFA president promised us that all our players would receive visas. There is no reason why our players should not receive visas," said minister Ahmad Donyamali, quoted by local news agency ISNA.

"I hope that all the conditions will be met so that the national team can partic-

ipate in the tournament in a calm and orderly manner."

The Iranian squad will now be based in Tijuana on the Mexican border with the United States during the tournament, according to the Islamic republic's football

backroom staff. "In Mexico, the Iranian national team is expected to obtain multiple-entry visas issued by the United States," he said. At the global football body's congress in Vancouver last month, president Gianni



Infantino said Iran would play their World Cup games in the US as scheduled. The Iranian team are currently preparing in Antalya, southern Turkey, and some of the squad went to the US embassy in Ankara on Thursday to submit visa applications for the World Cup.

Spain announce World Cup squad without Real Madrid players



PEAK POINT

Opinion & Editorial

Golden Palms Gwadar-The Silent Graveyard of Thousands of Dreams How Pakistan's Ordinary Citizens Were Allegedly Trapped in One of the Most Painful Real Estate Disasters Linked to Powerful Elites

By Mian Athar Ahmad Kakakhel

For more than two decades, thousands of Pakistanis have carried a wound that refuses to heal. It is not merely a financial loss. It is the destruction of trust, the burial of lifelong savings, and the slow death of hope.

The name of this wound is Golden Palms Gwadar.

What was once marketed as a symbol of prosperity, luxury, and the future of Pakistan has now become, in the eyes of countless victims, a painful monument to deception, silence, and abandonment. Thousands of overseas Pakistanis, retired government servants, bankers, widows, pensioners, and middle-class families invested their hard-earned money into the Golden Palms housing project in Gwadar, believing that one of Pakistan's most influential business groups — the Hashoo Group led by Sadruddin Hashwani — would never betray public trust.

Today, after more than twenty years, these investors remain stranded. No possession, No development, No justice, No accountability but Only silence.

The Dream That Captured a Nation - In the early 2000s, Gwadar was presented as the "Future Dubai of Pakistan." Investors were told that Gwadar would become the economic heartbeat of South Asia. Every newspaper, every television channel, and every real estate advertisement glorified Gwadar as the land of endless opportunity.

Amid this national excitement, Hashoo Group launched the Golden Palms project around 2004 through Associated Builders Pvt. Ltd. The credibility of the Hashoo name — owners of Pearl Continental and Marriott hotels and several prestigious businesses — gave ordinary Pakistanis immense confidence. People trusted the brand, People trusted the promises, People trusted the dream.

The project advertisements portrayed a luxurious housing society with modern infrastructure, commercial zones, residential plots, and massive future growth. Investors from Karachi to Peshawar, from Lahore to Quetta, and overseas Pakistanis from the Gulf, Europe, and North America rushed to invest. Families sold ancestral lands, Retired employees invested pension funds, Overseas workers sent years of savings, Some people invested the dowry money of their daughters, Others invested their entire life savings. Nobody imagined that decades later, they would still be begging for

justice. The Sudden Silence - Until approximately 2007, the project was aggressively promoted as a successful and rapidly progressing venture. The establishment of Pearl Continental Gwadar further strengthened public confidence. Investors believed the project had the blessing of powerful circles and would soon become one of Pakistan's most valuable real estate destinations. Then suddenly, everything went quiet. The advertisements disappeared. The offices became unresponsive, Calls stopped being answered, Emails received no replies and letters vanished into darkness. The investors, who once received promises and glossy brochures, were now left wandering from office to office seeking answers.

It was later discovered that the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) had suspended the project's NOC. Questions began to emerge regarding the legality and status of the land involved.

But by then, millions — perhaps billions — had already been collected from innocent citizens.

A Tragedy Hidden Behind Influence According to information received by victims through correspondence with GDA officials, the matter escalated into legal proceedings. Associated Builders Pvt. Ltd reportedly challenged the suspension in the Balochistan High Court. The result shocked investors.

In 2021, the Balochistan High Court reportedly cancelled approximately 12,000 acres of land in Mouza Ankara Janubi and transferred the land back to the Gwadar Development Authority.

For investors, this was devastating.

How could a project involving thousands of citizens, millions of rupees, and one of Pakistan's wealthiest business groups reach such a catastrophic point? Why were investors not protected? Why were innocent citizens left abandoned for decades?

Why did no authority ensure accountability before public money was collected?

These are the questions haunting thousands of affected families today.

Twenty Years of Suffering

"Twenty years" - An entire generation has passed.

Children who were toddlers when their parents invested in Golden Palms are now adults, Some investors died waiting for justice, Others became ill from stress and financial devastation, Many families fell into debt, Some lost opportunities to educate their children, Some marriages collapsed under

economic pressure, Many elderly investors passed away carrying files of Golden Palms documents that never transformed into homes or profits. This is not merely a failed project. This is a humanitarian tragedy. The emotional damage cannot be measured in numbers.

The Cry of a Former Banker

I, Mian Athar Ahmad Kakakhel, former banker of HBL Pakistan, am also among those victims.

Like thousands of others, I trusted the credibility of Hashoo Group. I invested my hard-earned money believing that a respected business empire would honor its commitments.

But after decades, we are still empty-handed. Our money disappeared into uncertainty while the powerful continued expanding their businesses and luxurious empires. We are ordinary citizens, We

collect enormous investments without ensuring complete legal clarity? Why were ordinary citizens not protected before approvals were suspended? Why were warning signs not publicly communicated earlier? Why did accountability mechanisms remain ineffective for so long?

The suffering of Golden Palms investors should serve as a national lesson. If powerful corporations can allegedly collect public money and leave citizens trapped in endless uncertainty for decades, then public trust in the entire investment system collapses. This issue is bigger than Gwadar. This issue concerns the credibility of Pakistan itself.

A Direct Appeal to NAB

Today, we appeal directly to the National Accountability Bureau

lawful investment. Gwadar was supposed to become a symbol of Pakistan's future. Instead, Golden Palms has become a symbol of unresolved pain.

The Human Faces Behind the Numbers

Behind every file lies a broken story. A retired teacher who invested retirement savings. A widow who trusted the project for her children's future. An overseas laborer who worked in Gulf heat for decades to save money. A banker who believed in institutional credibility. An elderly father who dreamed of giving property to his children. These are not "investors" in the cold language of corporate paperwork.

These are human beings. Human beings whose dreams were allegedly exploited.

The Silence of the



are not politically connected, We are not billionaires, We are people who trusted the system.

And today, we ask: Who will return our stolen years? Who will compensate our shattered hopes? Who will answer for the tears of old parents who died waiting?

The Shadow of Endless Litigation After losing before the Balochistan High Court, the matter reportedly moved to the Supreme Court of Pakistan and later transferred to the Constitutional Court.

The victims fear that prolonged litigation is becoming a shield behind which accountability is endlessly delayed.

Many investors believe that deliberate delays are exhausting the victims financially, emotionally, and physically. Every passing year weakens the affected families further. Some victims are now too old to continue legal battles. Others cannot afford lawyers anymore. Many overseas investors have lost faith completely. The tragedy is no longer just about land. It is about justice delayed to the point where it risks becoming justice denied.

The Failure of Regulatory Protection The Golden Palms scandal also exposes a terrifying weakness in Pakistan's regulatory system. How could such a large-scale project

(NAB). We urge NAB to hear the voices of thousands of victims who have suffered in silence for over twenty years.

The victims deserve - A transparent investigation. A complete forensic audit of collected funds. Identification of all responsible parties. Public disclosure of project records. Legal accountability where required. A mechanism for compensation and relief.

Many victims believe that influential individuals and corporate power have protected this matter from serious accountability for too long.

But the law must be equal for rich and poor alike.

If an ordinary citizen commits fraud, the state acts swiftly. Then why should powerful elites remain beyond scrutiny?

A Message to FIA and State Authorities

We also call upon FIA, GDA, anti-corruption bodies, and all relevant authorities to intervene seriously and transparently.

This matter should not disappear beneath layers of legal technicalities and procedural delays. Thousands of Pakistani citizens invested in good faith. Those citizens deserve answers. Pakistan cannot progress economically if ordinary people lose faith in the safety of

Powerful

Perhaps the most painful aspect of this entire tragedy has been silence. The silence after collecting money. The silence after legal disputes emerged. The silence toward desperate investors seeking updates. The silence toward elderly victims dying without closure. A responsible corporate group should have maintained transparent communication with investors for every stage of the dispute.

Instead, victims describe years of unanswered calls, ignored emails, and emotional abandonment. Silence can become cruelty when thousands suffer.

Pakistan Must Stand With the Victims

This is no longer only a legal dispute. This is a moral test for Pakistan. Will the state stand with ordinary citizens or only with the powerful? Will the cries of victims matter less than corporate influence? Will justice arrive before the remaining investors also pass away? The people affected by Golden Palms are not asking for luxury. They are asking for fairness. They are asking for dignity. They are asking for the return of what they earned honestly through decades of labor.

Social Media - The Last Hope

Many victims now believe that social media is their final hope. Traditional channels failed them. Offices ignored them. Procedures delayed them. Authorities moved slowly.

Now, through digital platforms, the victims seek to reunite scattered investors and raise collective awareness. Every affected person must speak. Every victim must connect. Every citizen must ask questions. Silence only benefits those accused of wrongdoing.

A National Wake-Up Call The Golden Palms matter should become a national wake-up call regarding real estate accountability in Pakistan. Authorities must establish stronger protections for investors, including: Strict scrutiny of housing approvals, Mandatory public disclosure requirements, Financial safeguards for investors, Faster dispute resolution systems, Criminal accountability in fraudulent cases, Stronger oversight of mega-project marketing. No Pakistani family should suffer like this again.

A Plea Before It Is Too Late Many Golden Palms investors are now elderly, Time is running out, Justice delayed for decades becomes unbearable cruelty. The victims are not seeking revenge, They seek recognition, accountability, and relief.

Pakistan's institutions must act before another generation disappears waiting.

Unity for Justice

All Golden Palms victims are urged to unite and raise their voices collectively for legal and accountability proceedings. For coordination and collective efforts regarding the NAB case and victim reunification, affected individuals may contact:

Mr. Engr. Faheem M. Faruqi

Phone: 0364-4264064

Email: buildfast@hotmail.com

Unity is the only strength left for victims abandoned for twenty years.

History remembers nations not by the wealth of their elites, but by how they protect ordinary citizens. The Golden Palms tragedy is a wound upon the conscience of Pakistan. Thousands trusted, Thousands invested, Thousands waited and thousands still suffer.

The authorities of Pakistan — NAB, FIA, judiciary, GDA, and all institutions responsible for justice — must now decide whether the voices of ordinary people still matter in this country.

Because if the cries of the weak continue to be ignored while the powerful remain untouched, then trust itself becomes the greatest casualty. And a nation without trust cannot prosper.

Written By Mian Athar Ahmad Kakakhel Former Banker — HBL Pakistan

Aurangzeb to lead panel on OMCs' Rs72bn windfall profits



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has formed a high-powered committee ahead of the upcoming budget to review the cross-subsidy mechanism and examine the possible recovery of Rs72 billion in alleged windfall profits earned by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) following fluctuations in global oil prices after the Gulf War, The News reported. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb will head the committee, while the ministers for economic affairs, planning and law will serve as

members. Former bureaucrat Musharraf Rasul has been appointed chief technical adviser, and the additional secretary budget will also be part of the body.

The committee has been authorised to include additional technical experts and officials if required. The committee will also review major fiscal and economic issues linked to the federal budget 2026-27, including expenditure rationalisation, development spending priorities, energy sector reforms, and implementation of right-sizing measures across ministries and divisions. The sources said the petroleum sector's Price Differential Claims (PDC) regimes in 2022 and 2026 remain controversial due to serious concerns regarding transparency, calculation methodology, inventory treatment, and fiscal impact. In 2022, the petroleum subsidy and related PDC exposure were estimated in the range of approximately Rs100-150 billion or more, while in 2026, weekly PDC liabilities alone reportedly ranged between Rs23 billion to Rs48

billion, with per-litre claims reportedly reaching approximately Rs77.98 per litre on petrol and Rs176.41 per litre on high-speed diesel.

It is widely alleged that PDC reimbursements were made without properly excluding existing petroleum stocks imported at lower prices, resulting in potential overcompensation to the OMCs and other market participants.

Concerns were also raised that excessive imports were allowed during subsidy periods, allegedly enabling larger PDC recoveries and creating incentives for abnormal stock accumulation and speculative inventory behaviour.

These practices reportedly aggravated Pakistan's external financing and foreign exchange pressures by increasing import outflows during periods of severe macroeconomic fragility. Simultaneously, the country suffered substantial fiscal losses through reduced petroleum levy collections, direct subsidy exposure, and growing quasi-fiscal liabilities.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi meets Pakistani pilgrims in Mina

PEAK POINT

MAKKAH: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday visited the camps of Pakistani pilgrims in Mina, Saudi Arabia and reviewed the facilities provided to them.

Naqvi met with the pilgrims, especially the elderly, and inquired from them about the facilities provided to them at these camps.

He walked up to a pilgrim, who was 100 years old, and praised him for his determination, which brought him here to the camp. The pilgrims told him that this time the arrangements were good. They said that although



they had to face some difficulties, but the staff was very cooperative. He expressed his gratitude to Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman for facilitating Pakistani pilgrims.

He, on the occasion, also appreciated Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousof and his team for their hard work.

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's CIO calls on Punjab CM

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Chief Investment Officer (CIO) of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Mr Konstantin Limitovskiy, met with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in Lahore on Tuesday.

The Director General of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Ms Xiaohong Yang, was also present.

The meeting discussed matters of mutual interest and increasing institutional cooperation. Maryam Nawaz informed about the record development projects in Punjab during meeting. Maryam Nawaz offered to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to partner in



development projects in Punjab. Maryam Nawaz said Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar programme of the Punjab government was appreciated in the 13th session of the Baku Urban Forum.

More than 100,000 houses have been built in a year under the Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar programme, Maryam Nawaz added.

She said electric bus and e-bike programmes are successfully underway in every part.

Governor Punjab assures CNG sector to take up issues with authorities

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Tuesday assured the CNG sector of support. He said that he would take up the issues facing the CNG owners with relevant authorities. The governor remarked this while meeting a delegation of the CNG Owners Association at Punjab House in Islamabad. The delegation apprised the governor of issues being faced by the sector and sought resolution of their demands. The governor said the concerns were legitimate and assured to take up the matter with the relevant authorities for early relief. He said that the business community was continuing operations despite challenging economic condi-



tions, calling it a reflection of patriotism. He expressed optimism that the country would soon overcome economic difficulties. Referring to the broader national context, the governor said that the civil and military leadership had enhanced Pakistan's stature at the global level. He also said that President Asif Ali Zardari had consistently advocated democratic continuity and reconciliation in the national interest.

Prince Rahim Aga Khan concludes Pakistan visit

PEAK POINT

GILGIT: Prince Rahim Aga Khan departed Pakistan after completing his official visit to the country, according to an official statement issued on Tuesday.

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry bid farewell to Prince Rahim at Nur Khan Airbase, where warm greetings were exchanged on the occasion of his departure.

During the farewell ceremony, the federal minister presented a special photo album to Prince Rahim Aga Khan. The album contained photographs of key meetings and memorable moments from his visit to

Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Tariq Fazal Chaudhry praised the contributions of the Aga Khan Development Network toward Pakistan's development, particularly in the fields of welfare, education and economic progress.

He said the Government of Pakistan highly values the network's development projects and welfare initiatives across the country.

The minister added that Prince Rahim Aga Khan's visit would further strengthen cooperation and partnership between Pakistan and the Aga Khan Development Network.

Pak-China youth coop opens 'new phase' of opportunity: Rana Mashhood

PEAK POINT

BEIJING: Chairman of Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan said Pakistan and China are entering a new phase of cooperation centered on youth development, technology transfer, industrial growth, and technical education, describing the partnership as a "window of opportunity" for the younger generations of both countries. Speaking during his visit to China alongside Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Rana Mashhood said it was encouraging to see young people from both countries eager to progress and work together. He said he regularly interacts with youth during foreign visits to understand their aspirations, adding that Pakistani and Chinese youth share similar ambitions and outlooks. According to him, there is "no difference" in the way young people from the two countries.



Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, presents a photo album to His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan upon his departure from Islamabad.

Starobilsk After the Strike: Ruins, Narratives, and the Battle for Truth

BY RAJA MOHSIN

On May 22, a quiet academic town in the Luhansk Oblast was thrust into the violent geometry of modern war. In Starobilsk, a drone strike tore through a college campus and its adjoining student hostels, shattering not only buildings but the fragile continuity of young lives mid-sentence. According to Russian authorities, 21 students were killed and more than 35 injured. Five structures—classrooms, dormitories, and a nearby commercial area, were struck, leaving behind a landscape that bore the unmistakable imprint of sudden devastation. Hours after the attack, the air was still thick with smoke and disbelief. Rescue teams clawed through concrete and twisted metal, pulling survivors from beneath collapsed ceilings

and scorched beams. Walls had split open; windows had dissolved into shards; corridors that once echoed with conversation now held only the brittle silence of absence. In scattered corners, charred mattresses, broken glass, and pages torn from textbooks lay as quiet witnesses to the interruption of ordinary life. Yet, as the dust settled, another contest began, one less visible but no less consequential. Segments of Western media were quick to question the veracity of the incident, labeling it "propaganda" or "fabrication." In response, Russian officials organized an unusual exercise in counter-narrative: a delegation of 65 foreign journalists was invited from Moscow to see the site firsthand. The intent was clear—to replace abstraction with immediacy, skepticism with observation. What those journalists encountered was not a

set piece but a rupture. Burnt-out dorm rooms, corridors emptied of motion, and classrooms reduced to debris formed a tableau that resisted easy categorization. Among those present, Pakistani analyst Ishtiaq Hamdani described the scene as "deeply unsettling," noting how the remnants of student life—beds, books, personal belongings gave the destruction a human scale that statistics alone cannot convey. "It felt," he observed, "as though life had only just stepped out and then never returned." Local officials, in their briefings, asserted that fragments recovered at the site suggested the use of Western-manufactured drone components, a claim that, if substantiated, carries implications extending far beyond the immediate geography of the strike. Whether these assertions withstand independent verification remains a matter for

further scrutiny, but their introduction underscores a broader and familiar tension: in modern conflict, facts do not merely emerge, they are contested, curated, and often weaponized. What is less ambiguous, however, is the nature of the target. Educational institutions spaces designed for continuity, inquiry, and growth occupy a moral threshold in times of war. When they are struck, the violence reverberates beyond military calculus. It touches on the idea of the future itself. Students are not merely civilians; they are, in a profound sense, a society's unfinished sentences. To interrupt them is to alter not just the present, but the trajectory of what might have been. Hamdani drew a historical parallel that lingers uneasily. He invoked the memory of the World War II, a period when the machinery of war expanded through

external supply lines and strategic patronage. His question—whether history risks echoing itself does not rest on simple equivalence, but on a recurring pattern: the prolongation of conflict through distant involvement, and the normalization of destruction through competing narratives. He also connected the tragedy in Starobilsk to other recent attacks on educational spaces, suggesting a troubling continuity. When classrooms become coordinates and hostels become targets, war slips its conventional boundaries. It ceases to be confined to frontlines and begins to erode the civilian architecture of everyday life. In the aftermath, local authorities in Luhansk have pledged to cover burial expenses and extend assistance to affected families. These gestures, necessary as they are, exist within a larger

void one that cannot be filled by compensation or reconstruction alone. The deeper loss is intangible: the quiet ambitions that will never be realized, the conversations that will never resume, the futures that now exist only in conditional tense. The story of Starobilsk is not only about a strike; it is about the struggle to define what that strike means. Between the rubble on the ground and the narratives that rise above it lies a widening gap, one that demands careful, honest engagement. For in wars shaped as much by perception as by force, the truth is not simply what happens, but what the world is willing to see. And in the end, beyond claims and counterclaims, one image persists: a classroom without students, a book without a reader, a future interrupted.