



**BOI Minister receives warm welcome in UK, engages diaspora, investors**



**Rubina Khalid stresses unfettered press freedom, responsible journalism**



**Freedom of press is cornerstone of democracy: Amir Muqam**

**Founded By:**  
(Late) Rehmat Khan

ABC CERTIFIED

Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com  
Website: www.peakpoint.pk

**Executive Group Editor**  
Arif Mehmood Khan



Monday 04 May 2026 Ziqad 16, 1447 A.H VOI No: 06 Issue No. 85 Pages 4 Rs. 20

# PM Shehbaz calls on Nawaz, discusses political situation in country, steps taken for peace in Middle East

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called on PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif at their Jati Umra residence in Lahore on Sunday, a statement issued by the PM's Office (PMO) said, adding that the Middle East conflict and the political situation in the country were discussed during the meeting.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was also present on the occasion.

The PMO statement said the premier briefed Nawaz on the "situation in the country" and exchanged views on the political situation.

He further informed him about the situation in the Middle East and Pakistan's

efforts for the restoration of peace in the region, the statement added.

The conflict in the Middle East, which is now more than two months old, began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28. And while hostilities have paused following a Pakistan-brokered two-week ceasefire on April 8 — which has been extended indefinitely by US President Donald Trump — the world continues to face its consequences.

Pakistan's civil and military leadership has been engaged in feverish diplomacy, leading the efforts for de-escalation. On April 11-12, Pakistan hosted the first high-level contact between Iran and the US in decades and mediated the meetings, known as the "Islamabad Talks".



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif with the captains of Peshawar Zalmi & Hyderabad Kingsmen and the Trophy of PSL 11.

# Iranian envoy reaffirms Pakistan's 'central role' in ongoing talks with US

PEAK POINT



IRAN: Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam on Sunday said Islamabad continues to serve as a central mediator in Iran's negotiations with the United States.

"Pakistan remains a mediator, and no decision has been made to alter this," the envoy said in an interview with an Iranian news agency, adding that progress in talks depends on a shift in Washington's approach.

His comments came a day after US President Donald Trump cast doubt over the prospects of a new Iranian peace proposal.

Iran's Tasnim and Fars news agencies reported on Saturday that Tehran submitted a 14-point proposal to mediator Islamabad. Details included ending the conflict on all fronts and enacting a new framework for the crucial Strait of Hormuz, Tasnim said. Ambassador Moghadam confirmed the same in today's interview, saying Iran had conveyed a new negotiation plan to Washington via Pakistan. He described Islamabad's efforts in the negotiations process as "valuable" and central to the current diplomatic outreach.

# Trump says US not likely to accept new Iran peace proposal

MAHARA ZAMAN



NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump said Saturday he will review a new Iranian peace proposal, but cast doubt over its prospects as he left open the possibility of future attacks on Iran.

Negotiations between the two countries have been deadlocked since a ceasefire came into effect on April 8, with one round of peace talks to end the more than two-month war having failed in Pakistan.

The door outlook came after Iran's Tasnim and Fars news agencies reported Tehran submitted a 14-point proposal to mediator Islamabad. Details included ending the conflict on all fronts and enacting a new framework for the crucial Strait of Hormuz, Tasnim said.

"I will soon be reviewing the plan that Iran has just sent to us, but can't imagine that it would be acceptable, in that they have not yet paid a big enough price for what they have done to Humanity and the World, over the last 47 years," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

In a brief interview with reporters in West Palm Beach, Florida, he declined to specify what could trigger new military action against the Islamic republic. "If they misbehave, if they do something bad, but right now, we'll see," he said. "But it's a possibility that could happen, certainly." On Saturday, Mohammad Jafar Asadi, a senior figure in the Iranian military's central command, said "a renewed conflict between Iran and the United States is likely."

# German FM, in call with Iranian counterpart, demands Hormuz reopening

PEAK POINT



GERMANY: German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl on Sunday demanded that Iran reopen the Strait of Hormuz and give up its nuclear weapons programme in a telephone call with Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi.

"I emphasised that Germany supports a negotiated solution," Wadepuhl said in a post on X about the call.

"As a close US ally, we share the same goal: Iran must completely and verifiably renounce nuclear weapons and immediately open the Strait of Hormuz, as also demanded" by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Wadepuhl said. In recent days, Wadepuhl and other German officials have been trying to ease a spat between US President Donald Trump and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz. Merz said on April 27 that Iran was "humiliating" Washington at the negotiating table, which provoked a series of angry responses from Washington. The US announced that 5,000 troops would be moved from US military bases in Germany, and Trump also announced that US tariffs on cars and trucks.

# NA to begin FY27 budget session on June 1

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to convene the National Assembly's budget session on Monday, June 1, with the federal budget for the next fiscal year set to be presented later that week.

The Senate session to consider the budget proposals will be summoned in the first week of June, with Finance Minister M u h a m m a d Aurangzeb due to present the proposals separately in both h o u s e s . P a r l i a m e n t a r y sources told The News on Friday.

# President, PM pay tribute media workers on World Press Freedom Day

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reaffirmed the government's commitment to safeguarding and promoting press freedom on World Press Freedom Day.

The day is being observed under the theme "Shaping a Future at Peace" this year.

The president and the prime minister emphasised the role of responsible journalism, truth, and credible information in strengthening democracy, national unity, and creating a conducive environment for media freedom.

In his message, President Zardari extended greetings to media workers globally and warned of increasing global threats to press freedom, including

misinformation, disinformation, artificial intelligence

The president said that this year's theme highlights



gence misuse, algorithmic manipulation, and pressure from powerful tech platforms and social media companies.

He said such forces can distort public discourse and weaken democratic values. Reaffirming constitutional commitment under Articles 19 and 19-A, he said a free press is essential for accountability, transparency, and democracy.

that peace depends on truth, and truth depends on courageous journalism.

"At the same time, freedom brings responsibility. Accuracy must not be sacrificed for speed and balance must not give way to partisanship. Public trust, the most valuable asset of free press, must be earned, protected and never taken for granted," he added.

He also referred to

Pakistan's unified response during Operation Bunyanum-Marsoos, praising the media for countering false narratives and maintaining national cohesion. The President also paid tribute to journalists who sacrificed their lives in pursuit of truth and called for stronger protections and safer working conditions for media professionals.

He also urged citizens to reject falsehood and support credible journalism, and called upon both federal and provincial governments to ensure enabling laws and safe working conditions for journalists across the country. Separately, PM Shehbaz paid tribute to journalists and media professionals worldwide for their services, stating that journalism plays a vital role in building an informed society.

# Bahria Town residents in Rwlp protest against absence of 'basic amenities'

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: The residents of Bahria Town Rawalpindi on Saturday staged a protest demonstration against the administration of Bahria Town for not providing civic facilities despite getting hefty fees from them.

A large number of residents, traders, property owners, investors, families, and community leaders from Bahria Town Phases 1-8 assembled at Allama Iqbal Junction Phase 8. Jamaat-i-Islami representatives also participated in the protest.

The participants carried placards, banners, and display boards, clearly expressing their demands and urging Malik Riaz and Bahria Town Private Limited to relinquish control.

Tahir Nihad Bajwa, Chairman of RABT and President of BRACE, led a procession and said that highlighted systemic failures in governance, service delivery, and regulatory oversight and declared that the community has been paying heavily without receiving basic rights or services.

He presented the charter of demands and said that it had already been submitted to all relevant authorities.

# SPORTS

## Peshawar Zalmi beat Hyderabad Kingsmen by 5 wickets, lift PSL trophy a second time



PEAK POINT

won the toss and opted to field — a decision that paid early dividends as in-form Maaz Sadaqat fell in the second over after scoring 11.

Captain

LAHORE: Despite Saim Ayub's fighting 54, Hyderabad Kingsmen managed only a modest 129 against Peshawar Zalmi in a high-pressure HBL Pakistan Super League final at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Sunday. Peshawar Zalmi, eyeing a second PSL title,

Marnus Labuschagne then joined Ayub, and together they took the score past 50 in the fifth over. However, just as the Kingsmen appeared to settle, Labuschagne was dismissed another setback when their leading batter Usman Khan, who had scored 389 runs in



the tournament before the final, was bowled by Sufiyan Muqem for just

for two, lost four wickets for just one run. Glenn Maxwell, Irfan Niaz and Kusal Perera all departed in quick succession, leaving the side reeling at 73 for six. Hassan Khan and Ayub briefly steadied the innings, taking the total to 90, but Aaron Hardie struck again to end Hassan's stay. Shortly afterwards, Naheed Rana removed Hunain Shah for nine. Ayub, however, continued his lone resistance and brought up a fighting half-century, scor-



ing 54 off 50 balls, before his innings ended when Hardie claimed his third wicket. Kingsmen were eventually bowled out for 129 in 18 overs. Hardie was the standout bowler, finishing with four wickets for 27 runs, while Naheed Rana picked up two wickets.



## Semi-Final Line-Up Finalized at PSA Satellite & National Junior Squash Championships



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: The semi-finalists have been confirmed in the PSA Satellite Men's Squash Championship, with Pakistan's Ins Khan, Saeed Abdul, and Kaleemullah Shoaib advancing to the final four after impressive performances in the quarter-finals. According to results released by the Sindh Squash Association, second seed Ins Khan secured a hard-fought

3-2 victory over Naveed Rehman in a 53-minute with game scores of 8-11, 11-3, 11-9, 9-11, and 11-5. Top seed Ins Ali Shah edged past Israr Ahmed 3-2, while Saeed Abdul defeated Shmilan Gul by the same margin. Kaleemullah Shoaib, meanwhile, registered a dominant 3-0 win over Faizan Khan to join in the semi-finals by KP's M. Saeed and Abu Bakar Siddiqui. In the

tion, top seed M. Faizan Khan (Army) overcame KP's Fawad Khan 3-2, while Muhammad Hussain of Punjab defeated Abdul Rehman 3-2. M. Bin Atif secured a straight-sets 3-0 win over Jasim, and SNGPL's Huzairfa Shahid caused a major upset by beating second seed Danish Sikandar (KP) 3-1 to reach the semi-finals. The Women's category saw dominant performances from Sindh players. Top seed Damia Khan defeated Saheema Fatima 3-0, Dua Nazakat beat Zanera Imran 3-0, Inam Mustafa overcame KP's Hiba Imtiaz 3-0, and Vaishnavi triumphed over Aiman Fatima 3-0—all advancing comfortably to the semi-finals.

## Muhammad Shoaib creates history; clinches ITF futures Singles Title

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's rising star Muhammad Shoaib etched his name in history by winning the singles title at the Flair Travel ITF Men's Futures M-15 Championships 2026 conducted in Memory of Late Khawaja Iftikhar Ahmad, at the PTF Tennis Complex, Islamabad from 26th to 3rd May-2026. In a thrilling final, Shoaib defeated Russia's Nikita Ianin with a score of 7-(6), 4-6, 6-2 in front of a packed and energetic home crowd. This remarkable victory marks the end of a 20-year wait, as Shoaib becomes the first Pakistani player since Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan to win an ITF Futures singles title. The triumph is a proud moment for Pakistan tennis and highlights the growing strength of local

talent on the international stage. A total of 70 men's players from 23 countries are participating in this prestigious

thank Almighty Allah for this achievement and for giving me the opportunity to make Pakistan proud on home soil.



international event. The participating nations include Pakistan, Kuwait, Russia, Uzbekistan, Sweden, Austria, Malaysia, Great Britain, Italy, Lithuania, China, Turkey, Algeria, Canada, USA, Ireland, Poland, Hong Kong, Nepal, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Japan. Speaking after the match, Shoaib said: "It was an amazing final, and Insha'Allah I will continue this momentum. He also expressed gratitude to the President PTF and Secretary General PTF for their continuous support. Mr. Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, President of the Pakistan Tennis Federation, along with Zia-ud-din Tufail, Secretary General PTF.

## Sajid Sadpara summits world's 5th highest mountain Makalu without supplemental oxygen

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Renowned mountaineer Sajid Ali Sadpara summited the world's fifth-highest peak, Mount Makalu (8,485m) in Nepal, without supplementary oxygen, the expedition's organisers said on Sunday.

Sadpara is on a mission to summit all 14 "eight-thousanders" in the world without supplemental oxygen, and this marks his 10th summit of that mission.

According to a statement issued by Seven Summit Treks, the expedition team Sadpara was part of, an excellent summit push at 5am on May 2 successfully



reached the summit of Makalu.

The statement added a team of three members, including Sadpara from Pakistan and Johanns Lau, with seven sherpas, stood on the summit, marking a remarkable achievement on the technically demanding peak.

"We wish them a safe and smooth descent back to base camp." Seven Summit Treks added.

Sadpara had arrived in Nepal on April 4 for the mission and reached Makalu base camp on April 16. The expedition team completed their summit rotation at Makalu on April 25.



LAHORE: Chief Sports Officer Mehmoodul Hassan pose a group with players of Punjab Police inter-district with women players here on Sunday.

# DRAP to publish medicine price survey within 2 weeks after 50 to 80% hike complaints

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan has said it is completing a major survey of medicine prices after public complaints that some pharmaceutical companies are increasing prices by 50 to 80 percent. During DRAP's 35th online Khuli Kachehri, held on Facebook Live, CEO DRAP Dr. Obaidullah and his team responded to complaints related to medicine registration, medical devices, nutraceuticals, import NOCs, licensing

delays, and drug availability. Responding to concerns over frequent price hikes, DRAP said prices of essential medicines remain regulated by the government, while non essential medicines are deregulated under policy. However, the authority said it has completed a survey covering around 50 percent of medicines in the market and the findings will be published within two weeks. DRAP also acknowledged concerns over medicines being sold under similar sounding brand names despite having

different active ingredients. Officials said the authority is working on the issue of look alike and sound alike medicines and asked stakeholders to report specific cases through the case management system. The authority said Pakistan's Central Drugs Laboratory in Karachi has recently been pre qualified by the World Health Organization, calling it a major milestone for Pakistan's drug testing and regulatory system. Officials said the recognition would improve public confidence, strengthen drug quality checks, and

support Pakistan's pharmaceutical exports. During the session, several applicants complained about pending cases, including nutraceutical dossiers submitted since 2021, establishment license renewals, delayed Form 7 issuance, and medical device registration issues. DRAP said most pending cases were delayed due to incomplete responses from applicants, while around 20 manual licensing applications would be completed by May 15. On recruitment, DRAP said posts for Assistant Directors, Deputy

Directors and related positions are expected to be re advertised within a week through the National Job Portal, newspapers and DRAP's website. Officials also announced that DRAP's different digital systems, including DRIS, PRIMIS and e app, would be linked into one unified entry system within two months to reduce multiple logins and improve case tracking. On the issue of unavailable medicines for myasthenia gravis patients, DRAP said it would review the shortage of Emagra 60mg and consider whether

the matter could be taken up urgently. The session also covered import procedures, additional pack sizes, veterinary and human nutraceutical facilities, medical device manufacturing, ATPM regulations, medicated cosmetics, pharmacy sale rules, and harmonization of provincial drug rules. DRAP said Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan have already approved therapeutic goods sale rules, while ICT is in process, and nationwide implementation is expected within three to four months.

## VC issues urgent call for 'Color-Blind' journalism on 'World Press Freedom Day'



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor (VC), Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences and Technology, Professor Zabta Khan Shinwari, on Sunday called

for "Color-Blind" journalism, emphasizing that freedom without responsibility is a catalyst for chaos. On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day being observed on May 3, he issued message addressing the deteriorating state of global discourse and the vital necessity of a "color-blind" approach to modern journalism. "The pen remains mightier than the sword, but in the digital age," he said, adding, "True press freedom is not

the liberty to amplify personal biases; it is the protected right to seek the truth. Journalists today carry the weight of social cohesion on their shoulders." "To achieve true equity in information, reporting must be color-blind. Whether covering conflict, scientific breakthroughs, or economic crises, the integrity of the fact must transcend the race, religion, or nationality of the individuals involved," he underscored.

## SSP Operations visits churches across Islamabad, reviews security arrangements

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza visited various churches across the federal capital and reviewed security arrangements.

An official told APP on Sunday that the SSP met officers deployed on duty and assessed the overall security measures in place.

Qazi issued necessary directions to further strengthen security and ensure effective



protection at all worship places. SSP Qazi emphasized vigilance and professionalism among officers, directing them to remain alert in view of the prevailing security situation. He said that Islamabad Police was committed to ensuring safety and security of all communities and their places of worship.

# Opinion & Editorial

**Arif Mehmoed Khan**  
Group Editor: 0333-5366814

**Samra Athar Kakakhel**  
Resident Editor  
Nadim Tanoli  
Joint Editor: Mob-0301-777874  
Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com  
www.peakpoint.pk

## 'Accidental' crime

If you live in a violent city like Karachi, you don't shed the violence at your doorstep when you enter the safety of your own home. The asinine actions of a nation so allergic to common sense will follow you home; much like the case of an unsuspecting 19-year-old medical student - the daughter of an MNA from MQM-P - who tragically lost her life after being struck by a stray bullet while standing on her terrace. Such stray bullets, often the result of celebratory aerial firing, have left at least 40 people - including women, children and elderly citizens - injured only in the month of April. In the face of what can only be described as malicious stupidity, all citizens are equal. Equally at risk. Having collectively gone through periods of intense gun violence, it seems as if the people of Karachi are entirely desensitized to the power of a bullet. Owing and brandishing firearms is instead a point of prestige for many, who like to display that prestige as a celebratory tradition during joyous occasions. But more often than not, a moment of joy for one becomes a death sentence for another. Aerial firing is described as firing 'without the intent of injuring a person'. But decades of reported deaths and disabilities really call the part about 'intent' into question.

## Stifling the press

Usama Khilji  
THERE is no democracy without accountability of power - and how is accountability possible if one is punished for speaking up? Such is today's dilemma as press freedom goes through yet another tough phase, with lawfare, enforced disappearances, online campaigns, harassment, and harsh financial tactics employed against those attempting to express opinions deemed unfavourable to the power wielders. The Constitution lists press freedom as a fundamental right in Article 19, which deals with freedom of speech; hence it establishes an intrinsic link between the two. An independent press has been traditionally cited as the 'fourth pillar' of the state in addition to the executive, legislature, and judiciary, effectively cementing the role of the press in holding accountable all three conventional pillars of a democratic state. Further, an independent press informs the citizenry of events and issues, and provides analyses so that citizens can shape their own opinions. Hence, the right to access to information, especially relating to matters of public importance, is protected by the right to information under Article 19-A of the Constitution. Social media has become a powerful avenue for the expression of views,

empowering citizens across the country. With access to the internet and growing literacy, citizens are taking on the role of independent press outlets by participating in public conversations. Unfortunately, attacks on individual speech have increased simultaneously. In the past few weeks, we have seen Pakistani authorities arrest a citizen for a satirical comment about the blockade of the capital for the US-Iran talks. This is tantamount to punishing one of the most potent cultural characteristics of the Pakistani internet user: humour. Journalists have borne the brunt of the state's wrath as the government started to take its mediation efforts in the US-Iran crisis seriously. A concerted online campaign against Matiullah Jan led to him losing his job as TV talk show host for his 'crime' of inviting foreign journalists to the National Press Club and, ironically, apprising them of the state of press freedom in the country. Journalist Fakhar-ur-Rehman, working for a Turkish news agency, was also arrested and brought to court in handcuffs before being granted bail. He was accused of sharing "false information" under Section 26-A of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca), which carries a punishment of up to three years. Who determines what counts as false information, and whether jailing someone for sharing it is a proportion-

ate punitive measure? But who determines what counts as 'false information', and whether jailing someone for sharing it is a proportionate punitive measure? Section 26-A of Peca clearly fails the proportionality test of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). It also fails the legality and necessity test by introducing a law without stakeholder input or public debate, that leaves 'false information' undefined and criminalises free speech. In short, Peca is being used as instrument of lawfare. In addition to the 'false information' section, the 'glorification of an offence' and 'cyberterrorism' sections of Peca have also been abused by the state, as seen in the 17-year sentence handed down to human rights lawyers Imaan Mazar-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chhattha for tweets about human rights, counterterrorism policy, and the Constitution. The 100th day of their incarceration falls on World Press Freedom Day, being observed today, with no signs of their appeals being listed in the higher judiciary so far - exposing yet another failure of due process in the post 26th- and 27th-Amendment judiciary. There have been laws promulgated to protect journalists, such as the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act of 2021. Courtesy Dawn

## Caught in the Middle

Muhammad Ali Ehsan  
THERE are powers that look at American involvement in the Iran war as a significant opportunity to settle scores. Tying down an adversary in a war seems to be an achievable goal for them. I would earmark Russia as one such great power. However unlike many others, I believe China holds no such ambitions; in fact, it is a great power that is caught in the middle. China's international position improved remarkably after the September 11 attacks, during the 20 years that the US was busy fighting the War on Terror. But this war, and its continuity, is considered to have hit the core of China's Achilles Heel: the disruption and discontinuity of its energy supplies. It is in this context that I want to write not just about China as a great power caught in the middle of this war, but also as an influential actor in Middle Eastern politics, and a medium power, Turkey. Unlike popular belief, the threat to China's energy supply is not immediate but long-term. China retains a massive reserve oil stockpile of an estimated 1.4 billion barrels of oil. The daily consumption of oil by China is 15 to 17mb/d (millions of barrels per day), and considering that global oil consumption is nearly 100mb/d, this Chinese oil reserve, given the continued disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, can serve Chinese needs for the next 6 to 8 months. China produces 4 to 4.5mb/d, and this domestic production covers only 25% of China's total demand; the rest China imports, which is closer to 10 to 11mb/d. This makes China the largest importer of crude oil in the world. Given this reality, to state that China is sufficiently insulated from the near-term disruption of energy supplies is a fair assumption to make. If the war escalates, China can end up facing huge energy supply problems, yet the China that we know may already be prepared to make a switch to alternative sources of energy. Indian Ministry for External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, said something very reasonable and interesting about China. Courtesy Tribune

## Wani urges UN to halt crackdown on Kashmir's educational and religious institutions



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the Kashmir Institute of International Relations, Altaf Hussain Wani has sought the UN Special Rapporteur's urgent attention towards the "systematic and selective targeting" of educational and religious institutions in Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir. In a detailed communication submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nazila Ghanaee, Wani expressed serious concern over the designation of Jamia Siraj-ul-Uloom as an "unlawful" institution under the

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). He termed the move "arbitrary and disproportionate," noting that it has abruptly disrupted the education of nearly 1,000 students enrolled in the seminary, who were forced to vacate and quit their studies mid-session.

Jamia Siraj-ul-Uloom, he mentioned, has for decades served as a reputable institution, producing doctors, scholars and IT professionals who continue to contribute meaningfully to society. The communication underscored that the closure is part of a broader and recurring pattern of actions targeting institutions that have been serving poor and marginalized communities.

He said that since 2019 hundreds of schools and colleges affiliated to Falah e Aam Trust have been closed by occupation authorities under the guise of UAPA. These actions, he underscored, have disproportionately affected institutions serving economically disadvantaged communi-

ties. The communication also points to structural changes in the region's education system following the adoption of the National Council of Educational Research and Training-aligned curriculum.

Citing international covenants under which the right to religious education is protected under, the KIIR Chairman urged the UN Special Rapporteur to: Call on Indian authorities to cease the selective targeting of institutions in Kashmir, ensure adherence to constitutional and international human rights obligations, safeguard the rights to freedom of religion, belief, education and reverse measures that adversely affect students and educational continuity.

"The continued closure and takeover of such institutions not only undermines fundamental freedoms but also places the educational future of thousands at risk," he said.

## BOI Minister receives warm welcome in UK, engages diaspora, investors

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh received a warm and enthusiastic welcome during his visit to Manchester, where he attended a prestigious gathering on the sidelines of a Commonwealth conference.

Despite a busy official schedule, the minister visited both Manchester and Birmingham to engage with the overseas Pakistani community and strengthen ties with key stakeholders. A distinguished reception was hosted at Dean House by Naveed Dean, Chairman of Supreme Finance UK, bringing together British parliamentarians, diplomats, legal experts, medical professionals, and prominent business leaders. Among the notable attendees were UK parliamentarians



Yasmin Qureshi, Afzal Khan and Connor Byard, who praised the minister's contributions toward enhancing Pakistan's trade and investment environment. BOI Minister receives warm welcome in UK, engages diaspora, investors

They also acknowledged his philanthropic efforts for underprivileged communities, describing him as a dedicated advocate of social welfare.

In his remarks, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh expressed gratitude to the Pakistani diaspora for their hospitality.

## Rubina Khalid stresses unfettered press freedom, responsible journalism

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid on Sunday said that freedom of the press is the cornerstone of democracy and any curbs on it are unacceptable.

In her message on World Press Freedom Day, she warned that restrictions on freedom of expression are detrimental to societal progress and democratic continuity.

She reaffirmed that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always championed press freedom and democratic values.

Rubina Khalid emphasized that it is the state's responsibility to ensure a safe, pressure-free, and censorship-free environment for journalists.

She noted that unnecessary restrictions on media amount to suppressing the truth.

Highlighting the challenges of the digital era, she said the importance of responsible, credible, and verified journalism has increased significantly with the rise of arti-

cial intelligence.

She added that professional journalism remains the most effective defense against fake news and deep fakes.

The BISP chairperson underscored that while freedom is essential, safeguarding national interest and the state's image is equally important.

She urged the media to play its role in projecting a positive image of Pakistan globally. She called for a shift from sensationalism to research-based, balanced, and fact-driven reporting, terming it the need of the hour.

"Without press freedom, transparent accountability and a strong democracy are not possible," she said.

Rubina Khalid further stressed that dissent should be tolerated rather than suppressed as part of democratic traditions, cautioning that the spread of unverified information on digital and social media can cause national harm.

She reiterated that protection of journalists' rights and press freedom remains.

## Tarar felicitates newly elected CPNE office-bearers

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Sunday felicitated the newly elected office-bearers of the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), expressing the hope that the new leadership would play an active role in addressing challenges faced by the media industry. In a statement, the minister congratulated CPNE President Kazim Khan, Secretary General Gulam Nabi Chandio, Senior Vice President Ayaz Khan, Vice Presidents Shakeel Ahmed Turabi and Anwar Sajidi, Secretary Information Munazza Scham, and other newly elected members. Tarar said journalism remained a key pillar of a democratic society, adding that responsible journalism played a vital role in raising public awareness. He said the government would continue to work with the media industry to promote responsible journalism and strengthen journalistic institutions.

## Freedom of press is cornerstone of democracy: Amir Muqam

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON, and President of PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam, has said that World Press Freedom Day serves as a reaffirmation of the commitment to freedom of expression, access to information, and the promotion of democratic values.

In his message on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day observed on May 3, the minister noted that this day, first recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, is observed to pay tribute to the services and sacrifices of journalists worldwide. "A free, responsible, and empowered media is the fun-



damental pillar of any democratic society, playing a key role in transparency, accountability, and public awareness," Engineer Amir Muqam said.

The federal minister paid special tribute to the journalist community, particularly journalists from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stating that they are highlighting public issues with professional integrity despite difficult circumstances. He stated that the federal government continues to take measures for the protection.

## Police releases its performance report for the first 120 days of 2026

ABDUL SALAM BAITAB

BANNU: Bannu Police has released its performance report for the first 120 days of 2026. According to the report, under the leadership of District Police Officer Bannu, Yasir Afridi, the police carried out highly effective, organized, and result-oriented measures to eliminate crime and maintain peace during this period, achieving remarkable successes. In this regard, a comprehensive performance report has been issued. Bannu Police continued indiscriminate and vigorous operations against terrorists, criminal elements, drug dealers, and those possessing illegal weapons. A total of 73 intelli-



gence-based operations were conducted, during which 16 terrorists were killed and 18 were arrested, while 27 terrorist attacks were foiled in time through effective strategies. Additionally, 37 suspected individuals were taken into custody. Furthermore, the police arrested 367 dangerous proclaimed offenders and brought 203 drug dealers to justice.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal talking to Peace Dialogue conference here on Sunday.

## Minister for tax rationalization, structural reforms to boost dairy sector, ensure safe nutrition

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain has underscored the need for rationalizing taxes and bringing about structural reforms in the dairy sector to improve affordability, ensure safe nutrition, and support farmers in the country.

He was speaking at a pre-budget consultation jointly organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Pakistan Dairy Association, said a press release issued here Sunday.

The minister said livestock accounts for nearly 60 percent of the agriculture sector and holds significant potential for both domestic nutrition and exports. He acknowledged that taxation policies, particularly sales tax on dairy products, had affected production and growth. "Softening of tax regime can help increase both production and revenue," he suggested.

Rana Tanveer noted that reducing General Sales Tax (GST) on milk was not difficult, thus proposals like pilot projects for pasteurization and the establishment of



"safe milk cities" are under consideration. He said improving milk quality and formalizing the sector would be key priorities going forward.

In his welcome remarks,

SDPI Executive Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri suggested multiple taxation scenarios and called for placing processed milk in a third schedule. He warned that rural milk collection centres

were shutting down, since pricing of processed milk directly hits loose milk markets.

Usman Zaheer Ahmad, Chairman of Pakistan Dairy Association, highlighted that 40 percent children in Pakistan suffered from stunting due to malnutrition, despite milk being the most widely consumed animal protein. He said the sector remains 98 per cent informal, with limited quality controls. He warned that 18 percent GST in 2024 caused 27 per cent decline in formal dairy sector. He proposed reducing

GST to 10 percent and bringing part of the informal economy into the tax net, which could generate up to Rs 250 billion in revenue.

Earlier, SDPI Head of Ecological Sustainability and Circular Economy Unit, Zainab Naeem, said the consultation aimed to bring together government, private sector and civil society to address food insecurity and link the dairy sector with nutrition. She emphasized that milk should be treated as a basic nutritional necessity rather than a luxury item. She called for strategies.