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MORNING NEWS BRIEF

Your Essential Guide to the Day's Happenings

POLITICS & GOVERNANCE

- In an action against Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) in the aftermath of North Waziristan incident, 22 activists of the group were detained from different parts of Bannu on Monday night and sent to the Haripur central jail. [Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code](#), a law dealing with the maintenance of law and order, was imposed in South Waziristan tribal district for ensuring the security and lives of the general public.
- Defense Secretary Lt Gen [®] Ikram-ul-Haq, in a briefing for National Assembly's defense committee, said that [government would maintain the writ of the state](#). He was commenting on the North Waziristan incident.
- Foreign Office believes that BJP's anti-Pakistan rhetoric during its electoral campaign acted as a hurdle in the way of [an invitation for Prime Minister Imran Khan](#) to Mr Modi's swearing-in ceremony. It is pertinent to mention that all nations from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) were invited to Mr Modi's first term oath-taking ceremony in 2014. The guest list is quite different this time, reflecting the government's priorities during the second tenure.
- A team of experts from the World Health Organisation (WHO) has arrived in Karachi to support the health authorities in their response to [an outbreak of HIV in Larkana](#).

ECONOMY

- [Budget for the next fiscal year \(2019-20\)](#) will be tabled in the National Assembly on June 11. The budget would envisage measures for generating an ambitious figure of Rs 1.4 trillion in additional revenues. According to the plan approved by the federal cabinet, this target would be achieved through levying of new taxes worth Rs 700 billion.

- The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), has meanwhile, permitted a 55 paisa per unit [increase in power tariff](#) for all the power distribution companies, except K-Electric, on account of fuel price adjustment for April. Additionally, [fuel prices](#) are also expected to witness a massive hike ahead of Eid.

SOUTH ASIA

- [A rare meeting, aimed at bringing 18 years of Afghan conflict](#) to an end, between senior Afghan Taliban Officials led by the Taliban co-founder and political leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and Afghan political figures took place in Moscow. Taliban leadership on this occasion reiterated that withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan was a prerequisite for any peaceful deal.
- The [Indian armed forces have finally corroborated the Pakistani](#) claim that Pakistan Air Force (PAF) aircraft bombed a target close to their brigade-level headquarters on February 27 when senior Indian army commanders were present there. PAF had, earlier on, claimed that it had made airstrikes on February 27 in response to India's botched airstrikes in the Balakot area of K-P on February 26.
- As [‘sexual favour’ scandals](#) rear their hideous heads in Afghanistan, Afghan government, in order to ascertain the veracity of the allegations, has called for an investigation into allegations that high-level government members were offering jobs in exchange for sexual favours.

CHINA

- China's Vice President Wang Qishan, who was on his three-day visit to Pakistan, has [concluded his “highly successful” visit](#) after holding meetings with the senior Pakistani leadership, launching four mega projects, signing five accords, and reviewing progress on the CPEC, reported the Foreign Office. Both states also resolved to implement the recently concluded 2nd Phase of China Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA).
- After international concerns over the rising [illegal smuggling of the pangolin to China](#), one of the most trafficked animals in the world, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Pakistan has been conducting a detailed survey on pangolins in the country. It is feared that pangolins would face decline in their numbers.

- A statement issued by Turkish National Defense Ministry has confirmed that [a counter-terrorism operation](#), aimed at neutralizing terrorists and destroying their caves and shelters in Hakurk, northern Iraq, has been launched by Turkey.
- France, despite expressing its respect for the sovereignty of Iraq in adjudicating its domestic cases, has [redoubled its diplomatic efforts to avoid the execution](#) of its four citizens, currently on death row after Iraqi courts sentenced them to death for their alleged nexus with Daesh.
- Turkish government has termed the reports pertaining to an American ultimatum to end its [purchase of Russian S-400 air defense missile systems](#), as baseless and unfounded.
- A senior Iranian official, while on his visit to Qatar, [has expressed the Iranian desire to engage in dialogue](#) with the Gulf neighbours for de-escalation of simmering tensions in the Persian Gulf. On the other hand, American National Security Adviser John Bolton, notorious for promoting 'regime change' in Iran, has also arrived in the UAE for talks scheduled for May 29, 2019.
- American President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, accompanied by Trump's special representative for international negotiations Jason Greenblatt, and the special US representative for Iran Brian Hook, has embarked on a visit to the Middle East. [The trip aims at securing support for a June 25-26 US-led conference in Bahrain for finalizing a long-promised peace plan](#), termed by Trump as the "deal of the century", for the region. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have confirmed their participation, but Russia and China have decided not to participate.



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