



# Islamabad POST

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**Kh. Asif stresses cultural relations with Bangladesh**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Ukraine may have to give up land to Russia**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Adam Milne rules out of PSL 10**

Detailed News On Page-06



**‘Will preserve sanctity of treaty’**

## All options on table to preserve water treaty: FO

He told the media that Pakistan was in touch with all the friendly countries to convey its position clearly, however, there were no mediation efforts so far

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday said that it would do everything to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty as all options were on the table to preserve the Indus Water Treaty - a lifeline and right of 240 million people - sanctified by international law, and bilateral treaties. "The Indus Water Treaty has been very clear. It's unambiguous... All options are on the table for Pakistan. It is our lifeline. It is our right, sanctified by international law, customary law, bilateral treaties. We will do everything to secure this right for our people," Foreign Office spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said at his weekly press briefing here. He told the media that Pakistan was in touch with all the friendly countries to convey its position clearly, however, there were no mediation efforts so far. Reiterating the decisions taken by the National Security Committee in its meeting on Thursday, including the closure of Wagah Border, suspension of trade, closure of airspace, downgrading of diplomatic ties, and suspension of visas, excluding Sikh pilgrims, he said that India was in no position to make any unilateral decision to hold the water treaty in abeyance. "Pakistan is a responsible country. It remains committed to fulfill its obligations under international law and bilateral agreements. However, it takes two to tango. India should not create a situation where we are constrained to take extreme steps... The National Security Committee has pronounced itself very clearly that any attempt to dramatically alter or stop the water treaty would be considered as an act of war," he said. Commenting about the apprehension that Indian could misuse the Pakistani prisoners for its anti-Pakistan motives, the spokesperson expressed hope that

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**UN urges Pakistan, India to have 'maximum restraint'**

"Any issues between Pakistan and India should be resolved peacefully," says United Nations

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The United Nations (UN) urged Pakistan and India to show "maximum restraint" as the nuclear-armed rivals imposed tit-for-tat diplomatic measures over a deadly shooting in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Relations have plunged to their lowest level in years, with India accusing Pakistan of supporting "cross-border terrorism" after gunmen carried out the worst attack on civilians in contested Muslim-majority IIOJK for a quarter of a century. "We very much appeal to both the governments [...] to exercise maximum restraint, and to ensure that the situation and the developments we've seen do not deteriorate any further," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters in New York on Thursday. "Any issues between Pakistan and India, we believe, can be and should be resolved peacefully through meaningful mutual engagement".

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review the ongoing process of privatization of PIA. – DNA

**President Zardari lauds NSC measures**

Says decisions made by NSC reflect the sentiments of the Pakistani people

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has appreciated the decisions taken by the National Security Committee (NSC) in response to India's baseless actions in the aftermath of the Pahalgam incident in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The president expressed his views when Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi called on him to give a detailed briefing on India's irresponsible actions. He said all decisions made by the NSC reflected the sentiments of the Pakistani people, and the entire nation stood firmly behind the committee's decisions and actions.

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**4 security officials martyred in Quetta**

Search operation has also been launched in the area to arrest the suspects

STAFF REPORT

QUETTA: Four security officials were martyred and three injured in an explosion near a vehicle of the bomb disposal squad in Quetta on Friday. Security sources said the blast occurred in Margat area in suburb of Quetta. The martyred officials include Subedar Shehbaz Amin, Naib Subedar Abbas, Sepoy Khalil and Sepoy Zahid. The injured included Lance Naik Zafar, Lance Naik Farooq and Sepoy Khurram Saleem. The security forces have cordoned

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**Timely completion**

## Shehbaz demands 'transparency' in PIA privatisation

18% GST imposed on lease or purchase of aircraft abolished, announces PM's aide

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the concerned authorities to ensure transparency in the privatisation process of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) within the given time frame. The development came a day after the federal government officially invited expressions of interest (EOIs) from potential investors for the privatisation of PIA, marking a major development in its bid to offload a controlling stake in the national flag carrier. According to the Privatisation Commission, the decision was made to sell between 51% and 100% of PIA shares, along with management control, to the prospective buyer. Interested parties have until June 3, 2025, to submit their EOIs. Chairing a meeting to review the ongoing process of privatisation of the national flag carrier today, PM Shehbaz stressed that transparency must be central to the procedure for the privatisation of the airline.

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**Aurangzeb terms climate change existential threat to Pakistan**

He urged the need for speedy disbursements under the Fund unlike the experience of the least developed

AGENCIES

NEW YORK: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has singled out climate change as an existential threat facing Pakistan. He was addressing the High-Level Dialogue of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage in Washington on Friday. The Finance Minister said Pakistan is the biggest proponent of the Loss and Damage Fund set up at COP28 through an agreement by 198 countries.

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## Briefs

**Pak-Saudi FMs discuss regional developments**

DPM/FM briefed Prince Faisal on decisions taken by the Pakistan's National Security Committee

IKRAM ULLAH JOYIA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar @Mishaq-Dar50 today received a call from the Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan @FaisalbinFarhan. The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the current status of bilateral relations. They also discussed the regional developments. DPM/FM briefed Prince Faisal on decisions taken by the Pakistan's National Security Committee in the wake of unilateral measures announced by India.

**CCI meeting summoned on May 2**

Sindh CM Murad vows to oppose projects that go against Sindh's interests

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting has been summoned on May 2 (Friday) to discuss the canals project, a day after the federal government put the contentious project on the back burner following weeks of protests in Sindh.

**Holiday Notice**

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. – Editor

## Following Pahalgam attack FS shares outcomes of NSC with diplomats

Foreign Secretary underscored that Pakistan has always rejected terrorism in all its forms



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch briefed a group of Islamabad-based heads of mission and diplomats on the evolving situation following Pahalgam attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Foreign Secretary shared the outcomes of the National Security Committee meeting.

She rejected Indian misinformation campaign against Pakistan and said that such tactics would obstruct the path to peace and stability in the region. Foreign Secretary underscored that Pakistan has always rejected terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. She also cautioned against Indian attempts to escalate tensions and reaffirmed Pakistan's readiness to counter any misadventure.

## Senate passes resolution rejecting India's claims on Pahalgam attack

Upper House also denounces New Delhi's propaganda campaign, unilateral suspension of Indus Waters Treaty

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Senate of Pakistan passed a unanimous resolution rejecting India's allegations linking Pakistan to the Pahalgam attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), labelling them as baseless and politically motivated. The resolution, presented during the Senate session, strongly condemned all forms of terrorism and emphasised that targeting innocent civilians goes against Pakistan's core values. It also denounced India's orchestrated propaganda campaign and unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, terming it a violation that could be interpreted as an act of war. The resolution warned that Pakistan is fully capable of defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity against any aggression. Senate passes resolution rejecting India's claims linking Pakistan to Pahalgam attack It reaffirmed the country's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination and demanded accountability from India for its acts of terrorism and targeted assassinations abroad, including on Pakistani soil. The resolution was in response to India's unilateral and frivolous measures taken against Pakistan following the deadly shooting in the occupied valley.


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## US monitoring situation but 'not taking position'

FOREIGN DESK



WASHINGTON: The United States has once again condemned the terrorist attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), but remained silent on whether it has played any mediatory role in easing tensions between Pakistan and India. An attack on tourists in IIOJK this week sparked a new crisis between nuclear-armed South Asian neighbours India and Pakistan, with New Delhi blaming Islamabad for the killings – with the Islamabad strongly denying the allegations. During a press briefing at the State Department, spokesperson Tammy Bruce said: "The United States stands with India [and] strongly condemns all acts of terrorism."




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## Punjab advancing cardiac healthcare: Khawaja

LAHORE:Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has said that under the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, concrete steps are being taken to provide the best health facilities to the people of Punjab. He announced that state-of-the-art institutes of cardiology are being established in Lahore and Sargodha to meet the growing healthcare needs. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting at the Specialized Health Care and Medical Education Department on Friday. The meeting focused on the progress of the cardiac center being set up at Sahiwal Teaching Hospital. During the session, the minister was briefed on the latest developments related to the project. He emphasized the importance of timely completion and directed authorities to ensure the cardiac center at Sahiwal Teaching Hospital is completed without delay. The meeting was attended by Special Secretary Development Zeeshan Shabbir Rana, Additional Secretary Anwar Briar, Chief Planning Officer Abdul Haq Bhatti, and Director Finance Hamadul Rab. Principal Sahiwal Teaching College Professor Imran Hassan and his team, along with the XEN and SDO, joined the meeting via video link. —APP

## Govt committed to eradicating malaria: Punjab CM

LAHORE:Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif reaffirmed her government's commitment to eliminating malaria from the province on the occasion of World Malaria Day. In her special message on Friday, she termed malaria a dangerous but treatable disease and stressed the need for collective efforts to eradicate it. "Elimination of malaria and ensuring the creation of a healthy society are among the top priorities of the Punjab government," she said, adding that a modern strategy is being implemented across the province to control the disease. Highlighting the government's proactive approach, the Chief Minister announced the allocation of special funds for malaria prevention. "Anti-malaria spray campaigns, free tests, and treatment facilities are being provided in every district of Punjab," she said. Maryam Nawaz Sharif further stated that timely medical assistance is being ensured in malaria hotspots. She also urged the public to take preventive measures, including covering clean water and using mosquito nets. "Every child, every mother, every family of Punjab is our priority, and their protection is our mission," the Chief Minister emphasized. She said that the Punjab government's renewed focus on health and prevention marks a significant step in its mission to create a healthier and malaria-free province. —APP

## Globalization as modern neocolonialism undermines Muslim intellectual autonomy: Anis

ISLAMABAD: Globalization reflects a modern form of neocolonialism deeply embedded in global institutions, media, and academia. These domains serve as key instruments for the continued projection of hegemonic narratives and expansive global influence, which undermine intellectual independence, distort social structures, and reduce human interaction to self-centered individualism. To truly decolonize their minds, souls, and even territories, the Muslims must return to their original sources of knowledge and embrace learning processes that nurture critical thinking. Prof. Dr. Anis Ahmad, renowned scholar and founding vice chancellor of Riphah International University, observed this while addressing the inaugural lecture of a series titled "The World Today and the Future of Humanity" at the Institute of Policy

Studies (IPS). The six-part series has been organized in collaboration with the Markfield Institute of Higher Education, UK, and the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) to foster informed debate on the evolving intellectual and ideological challenges the Muslim world faces today. Dr. Thameem Ushama from IIUM and Yousuf Farooq from the Islamic Foundation, UK, also joined the session. While cautioning against superficial solutions, Dr. Anis said

the prevailing global environment cultivates a fear of the unknown, undermining confidence-building and intellectual independence. As such, intellectual identities have been shaped by the dominant paradigms, frameworks that often obstruct, rather than facilitate, genuine transformation. Consequently, people respond to greater evils with lesser evils instead of initiating a meaningful paradigm shift. For the Muslim Ummah, rediscovering its epistemological

foundations is imperative. How people define, pursue, and value knowledge shapes their worldview. The Islamic tradition views knowledge not as a human creation but as a divine endowment from Allah. Therefore, humanity's role is to receive, transmit, and act upon this knowledge with responsibility. This understanding provides an ethical lens through which all phenomena must be evaluated. Concepts such as ma'rifah (spiritual knowledge), hikmah (wisdom), and hidayah (divine guidance) carry profound messages that shape the moral and intellectual bearings of the Muslims. These, he asserted, must form the basis for a renewed intellectual and moral vision capable of addressing contemporary challenges. "This is a world of media — where fast knowledge is treated like fast food," Dr. Anis said, critiquing the superficial learning driven by digital

media and global narratives. He observed that while language is a fundamental communication tool, it must be complemented by a deeper understanding of the human psyche, which is an inherently holistic pursuit. Human dignity and integrity must remain central and intact in collectivist or individualist contexts. Dr. Anis also warned against the growing dominance of individualism. "The nucleus has shifted from collectivism to individualism, with grave consequences for society," he observed, connecting this shift to postmodern thinking. This leads to far-reaching consequences, especially for family life. Even the most traditional family structures are now affected, and since the family is the basic unit that makes or unmakes society, the implications are profound. Despite outlining several challenges, Dr. Anis concluded on a hopeful note. —DNA

## Promoting inclusion through Art Serena Hotels, KDSP host art exhibition of kids with down syndrome

The exhibition served as a powerful platform to promote inclusion and celebrate the abilities of individuals with Down syndrome

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels as part of its ongoing Cultural Diplomacy Initiative, sponsored the Karachi Down Syndrome Program (KDSP) Art Exhibition, a heart-warming showcase of creativity and resilience. The event featured an inspiring collection of paintings created by students of KDSP, highlighting their artistic talents and unique perspectives. The exhibition served as a powerful platform to promote inclusion and celebrate the abilities of individuals with Down syndrome. Through rich colors and heartfelt expressions, the young artists captivated the audience and demonstrated the transformative power of art. Serena Hotels believe in using its platform to support meaningful causes and promote an inclusive society and



feel honored to partner with KDSP and contribute to a space where every individual's talent is celebrated. Expressing gratitude, Ms. Ta-

bish Shehzad CEO of KDSP stated, "We are thankful to Serena Hotels for championing our cause. Exhibitions like this help strengthen the voices

and creativity of our students and allow the community to appreciate their potential and contributions." The event reinforced Serena Hotels'

commitment to community engagement, building bridges through shared values of compassion, diversity, and empowerment.



## Zero tolerance on over speed, axle load: Aleem

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has directed that zero-tolerance policy be strictly enforced against over-speeding and axle load violations across all national Highways & Motorways and no leniency should be observed in this regard. He further instructed that all commercial vehicles must obtain fitness certificates within the next three months and special training programs be arranged for their drivers, as well. These directives were issued in a high-level meeting chaired by the Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan during his visit to the National Highways and Motorway Police Headquarters, said a press release on

Friday. Abdul Aleem Khan stressed that in order to reduce road accidents, vehicles older than 20 years should not be allowed to come on Motorways and separate certification must be issued for their tires, accordingly. He instructed the Inspector General of Motorway Police to formulate a comprehensive and enforceable policy on these matters, as soon as possible. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan expressed concern over recurring accidents at the same location on Motorways and noted that registering FIRs for over-speeding has yielded positive outcomes. He reaffirmed that protecting human lives is top priority and the Motorway Police must

continue to improve upon their already commendable standards. During the briefing, IG Motorway Police informed the Federal Minister that 53 FIRs have been registered so far for the theft of safety barriers with 36 individuals arrested while over 2,000 meters of stolen fence has also been recovered. Upon his arrival at the Motorway Police Headquarters, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan was presented with a guard of honor. He was received by the Federal Secretary for Communications, the IG Motorway Police and other senior officers. Federal Minister also laid a floral wreath at the Martyrs' Memorial in honor of officers who

laid down their lives in the line of duty. Aleem Khan inspected the Motorway Police Control Room and was briefed on the process of handling complaints via the helpline and ensuring their swift solution. He also emphasized the need for the Motorway Police to enhance their presence on social media in accordance with modern-day requirement. In memory of Inspector Mansoor Asghar and other officers recently martyred on the duty, the Federal Minister offered Fateha for their departed souls. He further directed motorway officials to prioritize their own safety and proposed dedicated "shoulders" at various points along the Motorways to safely stop vehicles during emergencies. —APP

## Delegation of OIC steering committee visits QAU

ISLAMABAD: Under the facilitation of the COMSTECH Secretariat, Islamabad, a high-level delegation comprising participants of the 6th OIC Steering Committee Meeting visited here Friday. Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad, a member institution of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence. The delegation was warmly received by Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar (S.L), who welcomed the esteemed guests on behalf of the university. During the meeting, Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar highlighted the immense potential of Islamic countries to lead advancements in science and technology. He emphasized the importance of strategic collaboration among member states and underscored Quaid-i-Azam University's commitment to promoting scientific research and academic excellence. "Quaid-i-Azam University stands ready to collaborate with OIC member countries in all areas of science, research, and higher education. We believe that through mutual cooperation, we can address common challenges and harness our collective strengths," said the Vice Chancellor. He further stated that with the headquarters of the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) located in Islamabad, Pakistan has a special responsibility to take the lead in supporting

and guiding fellow Islamic countries in their scientific and technological pursuits.

Earlier, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ishtiaq Ali, Director of ORIC, Quaid-i-Azam University, briefed the delegation on the university's academic faculties, diverse disciplines, available facilities, and key achievements. Referring the international Standing of the University he said that in 2025, the QS World University Rankings recognized QAU's strength, placing it at the distinguished rank of 315th in the world, 9th in South Asia and 84th in Asia while the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for 2025 ranked QAU top in Pakistan and 401st globally. Prof. Dr. Taswar Hayat, Dean Faculty of Natural Sciences, QAU, Prof. Dr. Irfan Zia Qureshi, Dean Faculty of Biological Sciences, QAU, Dr. Shafiq-ur-Rehman, Registrar, QAU, and Muhammad Murtaza Noor, Media Advisor to COMSTECH, also attended the meeting. The visit aimed to strengthen ties between the academic and research institutions of OIC countries and explore collaborative opportunities. The delegation members appreciated the hospitality extended by QAU and acknowledged the university's valuable contributions to the advancement of science and technology in the region. —DNA

## Sindh to regulate prices of branded goods

KARACHI:The Sindh government has decided to regulate the prices of branded goods sold at supermarkets and supermarkets across Karachi. In this regard, detailed data on the production costs and profit margins of branded items will be compiled. A pivotal meeting was held on Friday at the Sindh Secretariat, chaired by Director General of the Bureau of Supply and Prices, Dr. Zahid Hussain Shar. The session was attended by senior officials of the Bureau of Supply, as well as representatives from all major superstores and supermarkets in Karachi. Addressing the meeting, DG Zahid Hussain Shar emphasized that it will now be mandatory for all businesses operating in Karachi to formally register their warehouses with the Bureau of Supply and ensure timely renewal of these registrations. He stressed the protection of consumer rights, asserting that full implementation of the Consumer Protection Act will be ensured. DG Shar informed participants that the Sindh government has granted the Bureau of Supply and Prices special authority to control prices of essential commodities, curb hoarding and profiteering, and determine prices for locally produced and branded essential goods in Karachi. —APP

## Kundi vows stronger public representation, federal coordination

LAHORE:Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday emphasized that efforts are being made to strengthen public representation in the province and to ensure coordination with the federal government. The Governor attended a luncheon held in his honour at the Lahore Gymkhana. The event was hosted by prominent journalist and analyst Itikhar Ahmad along with Samaa TV's Director News, Hafiz Tariq Mehmood. The gathering saw the presence of a large number of senior journalists, editors, and analysts from Lahore. Among the attendees were renowned journalist Mujeib-ur-Rehman Shami, analyst Hafeezullah Niazi, senior journalist Sajjad Mir, analyst Salman Ghani, anchorperson and General Manager of Neo News Nasrullah Malik, Rao Tehseen Ali, 360 TV's Director News Muhammad Usman. —APP

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## Briefs

## NDU delegation visits Parliament House

ISLAMABAD: A 63-member delegation from the National Defence University (NDU), including students and faculty members, visited the Parliament House on Friday. The delegation was warmly received by senior Senate officials, who guided them through the Senate Museum. There, an informative documentary was screened, highlighting Pakistan's parliamentary history and vital role of the Senate. Following the museum tour, the delegation visited the Senate Hall, where they witnessed the ongoing proceedings and received a detailed briefing on the legislative process and the functioning of the Upper House. The delegation evinced great interest in the Senate's operations, parliamentary traditions, and the democratic process. They thanked the Senate officials for the informative visit, describing it as both memorable and insightful.—APP

## Registration for PM's youth laptop scheme begins

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan said one hundred thousand laptops will be distributed nationwide on merit under the Laptop Scheme. In a statement issued on Friday he advises students to register on time. He said the last date to register for the laptop is May 20, 2025 adding that Laptop registration will be done through the Prime Minister's Digital Youth Hub. He said students from all public sector higher education institutes in Pakistan are eligible to apply. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan proudly announced the opening of registration for the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme, encouraging deserving students to seize this opportunity.—APP

## Senate passes bill to establish NIAS

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Friday unanimously passed a private member bill to establish the Nippon Institute of Advanced Sciences (NIAS), following clause-by-clause approval. The bill, introduced by Senator Danesh Kumar, seeks to promote high-quality education and academic excellence across diverse disciplines. It outlines the institute's focus on advancing knowledge, encouraging research and innovation, and supporting students' holistic development through comprehensive academic and career services, internships, extracurricular activities, and leadership opportunities. The proposed institute also emphasizes creating an inclusive and diverse academic environment that ensures equity and accessibility for all students and faculty. It aims to foster global engagement through international collaborations, study abroad programs, and the recruitment of international students and scholars, preparing graduates for global citizenship.—APP

## PIMS adopts transformative measures: ED

ISLAMABAD: With over 9,000 patients visiting daily, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) hospital is undergoing significant transformation to meet the growing healthcare demands of the population. "A series of major reforms aimed at improving healthcare services, patient satisfaction, and staff accountability at country's premier public hospital," Executive Director PIMS Dr Imran Sikandar said on Friday. Sharing a comprehensive update on transformative measures being undertaken to enhance healthcare delivery at the country's leading medical facility, Dr Imran Sikandar said every day, over 9,000 patients seek medical attention at PIMS, with 7,000 attending various outpatient

## Vaccination foundation of healthy Pakistan: Kamal

The Minister further stated that "under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, we remain committed to the complete eradication of polio. I am taking all possible measures to eliminate polio from across the country and to protect children from lifelong disability

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal said that "the foundation of a healthy Pakistan lies in protecting our children from preventable diseases. We are taking steps to increase immunization coverage to ensure timely delivery of life-saving vaccines to every child. Each year, approximately 7 million children in Pakistan receive routine immunization services. Through our polio campaigns, we reach over 45 million children. It is a matter of concern that Pakistan remains among the few countries where the poliovirus is still present." The Minister further stated that "under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, we remain committed to the complete eradication of polio. I am taking all possible measures to eliminate polio from across the country and

to protect children from lifelong disability. We appeal to religious scholars, the media, and civil society to play their full and effective role in the fight against polio. A safe and secure future for our children is a shared responsibility of us all." The details were later shared by the Spokesperson of the Health Ministry sharing, Pakistan is commemorating World Immunization Week 2025 from 24 to 30 April to promote the life-saving power of vaccines. Under the international theme of 'Immunization for All is Humanly Possible', the Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI), in collaboration with all provincial Expanded Programs on Immunization (EPIs), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and partners are carrying out a series of awareness activities to remind that vaccines are one of humanity's greatest achievements. Every year, Pakistan vaccinates over 7 million

children with routine immunization doses, in addition to reaching 45 million children through multiple supplementary polio vaccination campaigns. Since the creation of Pakistan's Expanded Programme on Immunization in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1978, millions of Pakistanis have been protected every year with life-saving vaccines. In the last 50 years alone, vaccines have saved 154 million people around the world, the equivalent of 3 million a year or 6 people every minute. Last year, Pakistan looked to vaccinate 7.3 million infants. Out of these, 1.2 million children (16%) did not receive any dose of measles vaccines because they did not complete the full schedule due to several reasons, making us susceptible to outbreaks. There are significant regional disparities in vaccination coverage as well, with almost half of Balochistan

children (49%) remaining under or partially immunized. Pakistan also remains one of the last two polio endemic countries in the world. "Vaccination is not just a health intervention, it is an investment in a healthier and more prosperous future," said FDI's Director General Dr. Shabana Saleem. "The EPI remains committed to ensuring that every individual, regardless of their location or circumstances, has access to life-saving vaccines." Pakistan provides free vaccination against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases in the EPI routine schedule. WHO Representative in Pakistan Dr. Luo Dapeng emphasized that WHO stands by Pakistan to continue reinforcing its immunization programmes. "Vaccines are safe. Vaccines work. Vaccines save millions of lives. Since 1948, WHO has been partnering with Pakistan as a founding member of the Or-

ganization and will continue to do so. Since the creation of the Pakistan Expanded Programme of Immunization in 1978 in partnership with WHO, we have worked together to protect and save the lives of millions of people. Every newborn deserves the benefit of these vaccines. Reaching every child is not only the right thing to do, but also the best investment to build a prosperous future for Pakistan; and it is humanly possible." Mr. Abdullah Fadil, UNICEF Country Representative shared that "I want to reiterate UNICEF's commitment to supporting the key components of Pakistan's Expanded Programme on Immunization that include service delivery, cold chain and driving demand for vaccines. Together, our aim is to reach every child, reduce the number of zero-dose children, and ensure that full immunization coverage across Pakistan."

## ANZAC Day 2025 commemorated in Islamabad

## DNA

members of the international community. Australian

Turkish Ambassador Dr. Irfan Neziroglu also attended

ing deeply with those in attendance. The presence



ISLAMABAD: As the first light of dawn broke over the capital, the Australian High Commission hosted a solemn and moving ANZAC Day ceremony, honouring the enduring legacy of service, courage, respect, and mateship that defines the ANZAC spirit. Held at the Australian High Commission, the ceremony was attended by diplomats, defence personnel, and

an High Commissioner Neil Hawkins led the commemoration, paying tribute to the sacrifices of Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) soldiers and all those who have served in conflicts past and present. "ANZAC Day is a moment to reflect not only on the bravery of those who served at Gallipoli, but also on the shared values and sacrifices of all who serve for peace,".

the event, symbolising the powerful message of reconciliation between former adversaries. The enduring friendship between Australia and Türkiye, once forged on the battlefields of Gallipoli, now stands as a beacon of peace and mutual respect between nations. The ceremony included the traditional laying of wreaths, the Last Post, a moment of silence, and national anthems, resonat-

of representatives from various countries underscored the universal themes of remembrance and reconciliation that ANZAC Day carries across cultures and borders. This year's ANZAC Day message—one of unity, reflection, and peace—was a poignant reminder of the human cost of conflict and the importance of fostering understanding between nations.—DNA

## PMYP makes significant strides in youth empowerment

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP) has made significant strides in empowering the country's youth. According to an available official document, the program's core focus was empowering youth through a comprehensive 4E framework, built on four key pillars: Education, Employment, Engagement, and Environment. The document claimed that this comprehensive strategy aims to cultivate a versatile and skilled youth demographic, empowered to spearhead positive transformation and advancement. These initiatives included, launching of the Digital Youth Hub, attracting over one million downloads, with 1,022,424 young individuals registering interest through the app. The National Youth and Adolescent Policy is in its final phase and under this policy, youth will be divided into two categories to better cater to their needs. The policy is being developed by incorporating feedback from one crore (10 million) youth, in collaboration with international partners. It will also include out-of-school children, transgender individuals, and special-needs youth. The Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme has reached a major milestone, with 600,000 laptops distributed across all phases by the end of Phase-III. The PMYP Laptop Scheme helped the youth start freelancing and set up a digital Skills Institute. The Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme has benefited 171,000 youths from March 2025, with a total of 71 billion rupees. Many operational programs were also provided such as Youth Internship Program and National Volunteer Core Skills construction and public service opportunities. The Youth Skills Development Program provided training in various businesses and technologies, while the Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme offered free loans to businessmen. The Youth Internship Program provided job opportunities to young people in Academia and the labor market, while the National Youth Council advised policy making. In addition, Talent Hunt Sports League and Sports Academies played a vital role in the development of sports and the Green Youth Movement trains young people with environmental protection. The National Volunteer Corps voluntarily encouraged positive change, and digital Youth Hubs connected young people with digital skills and opportunities. Talent Hunt Sports League and Sports Academies played a vital role in the development of sports and the Green Youth Movement trains young people with environmental protection.—DNA

## Punjab launches report on women protection helpline

ISLAMABAD: The comprehensive analysis, based on extensive data from the Punjab Women Protection Helpline 1737, explored emerging trends, service gaps, and key opportunities in the province's ongoing fight against gender-based violence (GBV). As a vital component of the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act 2016, the 1737 helpline provides survivors with access to legal aid, psychosocial counseling, and province-wide referrals, said a press release issued here on Friday. The report highlighted the pivotal role of data in driving accessibility and responsiveness, with a particular focus on enhancing infrastructure through technological upgrades and capacity-building initiatives. "The need for a survivor-centered approach to GBV is more urgent than ever," said Kalsoom Saqib, Director General of PWP. "This report reflects our resolve to turn data into a catalyst for meaningful, on-ground transformation." The Punjab Women Protection Authority (PWP), in partnership with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and NGO Rozan, officially launched its 2024 report titled "From Data to Action: Analysis of PWP Helpline 1737 and Strategic Strengthening of Punjab's Protection Framework.—APP

## IRSA releases 98,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 98,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 123,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1431.77 feet which was 29.77 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 40,400 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1128.50 feet, which was 78.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 44,600 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 67,800, 44,300, 32,200 and 7,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 22,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 8,100 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

## Pakistan to continue playing role across UN platforms

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday emphasized that Pakistan will continue to play a constructive and proactive role across all United Nations platforms in pursuit of lasting peace, sustainable development, and international cooperation. Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Pakistan firmly believes that multilateralism, inclusive dialogue, and respect for the UN Charter are the cornerstone of global peace and stability, the deputy PM said in his message on the occasion of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, the deputy PM said. He said Pakistan had consistently upheld the central role of the United Nations as the most inclusive and representative platform for advancing multilateralism. "We remain constructively engaged across all three pillars of the UN's work - peace and security, development and human rights." He highlighted that as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council for the term 2025-2026, Pakistan believes that the complex and inter-linked global challenges of our time, many of which stem from violations of the UN Charter, can be effectively addressed through renewed commitment to the multilateral system and consistent adherence to the UN Charter.—APP



Dr. Arshad Health Associates

"caring for all health needs"



## SHINGLES VACCINE, SHINGRIX

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**The vaccine is recommended for those over 18 with a weakened immune system and for older patients above 50 years of age.**

Shingles can be very painful and is more likely to affect older individuals. This is often due to a weakened immune system, which can happen with age, stress, or certain medical conditions and treatments.

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## The future of oil

OVER the past four years, forecasts have emerged from experts and international organizations questioning the future of oil, predicting that demand will peak in 2030 or 2035, after which it will begin to decline gradually – or perhaps collapse entirely – so that by 2050, demand may fall to 40 or 50 million barrels per day, a drop of about 60 percent from today's levels. The future of oil – ever since it became a key element in domestic and international politics, economics, and daily human life at the start of the 20th century – has been subject to doubt. Negative ideas and speculations have persisted among some economists, experts, media outlets, and even politicians. Among the ideas that once prevailed and then faded: First: The limited quantities of extractable oil, implying that oil is on the path to depletion, with a specific year often cited for when that would happen. This idea surfaced several times during the 20th century, most notably with the prediction by American geologist Marion King Hubbert in 1956 that US oil production would peak in or before the 1960s. The idea resurfaced multiple times in later periods, most recently in the 1970s with the Club of Rome report – prepared by renowned global experts – which predicted the depletion of raw materials, including oil. This was followed by a US government report in 1980 estimating that oil depletion would begin in the year 2000. Second: The idea that Saudi oil was nearing depletion surfaced at the start of the 21st century and was adopted by American expert and investor Matthew Simmons. In 2005, he published a book titled *Twilight in the Desert: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy*. This claim gained global attention, with numerous articles, studies, and books published about it – but it lasted no more than five years, as practical reality proved it wrong. Third: The idea that global oil production would reach its peak and then begin to decline. In the early 21st century, specifically in 2001, American professor and oil expert Kenneth Deffeyes published a book stating in its introduction: “Global oil production will reach its peak during this decade... and after that, it will fall and never rise again.” For the record, global oil production at that time was 85 million barrels per day. Today, it stands at 105 million barrels! Fourth: The recurring notion that oil use (consumption) will reach its peak and then decline. This idea began circulating in the late 1970s and early 1980s when Western countries, in response to OPEC's market influence, decided to reduce their oil use through various methods – most notably by reducing oil and energy consumption via measures such as setting speed limits for cars and promoting the use of coal and nuclear energy for power generation. The currently prevailing idea is to reduce the use of oil, gas, and coal (fossil fuels), or even eliminate them significantly, and shift to renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and even nuclear power to combat global warming. These ideas rise and fall – sometimes they dominate, and sometimes they fade. And this phenomenon is not limited to energy and oil but also applies to other areas – political, economic, cultural, and even artistic and literary. When it comes to the future of oil, there are pessimists, naysayers, attention-seekers, and those driven by political agendas. The future of oil use isn't shaped by wishes and desires, but by logic, global and local economic development, people's pursuit of prosperity, and – most importantly – national interests as defined by ruling elites.

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## Collapse of US higher education

THERE is no other way to say it. The American university as the United States has known it since the 1960s is at an end. The spate of college closings and consolidations that began 15 years ago is certain to increase over the next few years. Overall college enrolments peaked in 2010, but have fallen consistently since then, as the cost of college, the COVID-19 pandemic and other trends have curtailed students from attending higher education institutions. But with the recent crackdowns against protests on college campuses, the anti-DEI climate and the US government's persecution of foreign students, American universities are truly up against a tsunami. The trickle of institutions closing or on the margins is all but assured to turn into a flood between now and the end of the 2020s. Sonoma State University (aka. California State Sonoma) is among the latest universities facing budget cuts. Despite a Sonoma County court ruling that has temporarily put the university's plans on hold, Sonoma State still faces a budget shortfall of \$24m. Even if the order holds beyond May 1, Sonoma State can and likely will work in good-faith negotiations with staff, faculty and students to eliminate upwards of 22 majors, six departments, and more than 100 faculty positions. Specifically, the art history, economics, geology, philosophy, theatre/dance, and women and gender studies departments are on Sonoma State's chopping block, mostly liberal arts and the social sciences. The most expansive retrenchment in the past decade, though, occurred at West Virginia University in 2023. That August, after a six-year campaign to increase enrolment, West Virginia announced that it incurred a \$45m budget deficit, and that enrolment had dropped from roughly 29,000 in 2017 to just under 26,000 in 2023. The austerity plan was to cut 32 majors – including all of their foreign language programmes and its maths doctoral programme – and 169 faculty positions. But after weeks of student protests, the number ended up being 28 majors (nearly one-fifth of its undergraduate majors) and 143 faculty (a 13.5 percent reduction) instead. The sudden shift towards austerity has led to a steady stream of faculty and administrators resigning or taking retirement buyouts to leave West Virginia. Again, the undergraduate liberal arts majors and small academic graduate programmes were the main targets for cuts. Stories like what is happening at Sonoma State and has already occurred at West Virginia are part of a larger and terrible trend. As college matriculation for women has incrementally increased over the past 50 years, there has been a more drastic decline in men attending college, especially among white men. Since 1970, men have gone from 58 percent of all undergraduate college enrollees to only about 40 percent as of the early 2020s. Fully 71 percent of the decline in college attendance since 2010 coincides with the decline of men as students in higher education. Perhaps sexism disguised as disinterest in higher education in the wake of a women-dominant student body might be at least part of the explanation for this steep fall in enrolment.

# China turned table against Trump

Qamar Bashir



The irony is brutal. The tariffs meant to punish foreign adversaries have instead punished domestic consumers. The trade wars meant to lower deficits have likely widened them. The vision of renewed American strength has manifested as global disillusionment. And the promise to bring adversaries to heel has revealed an unsettling truth: the world is no longer America's to command. What remains now is the wreckage of broken agreements, the fraying of alliances...

DONALD Trump's return to aggressive protectionism—through sweeping tariffs on allies and rivals alike—has ignited what can only be described as a global trade war, or more aptly, a form of “tariff terrorism.” Cloaked in the rhetoric of “America First,” these economic policies were touted as the tools that would restore American greatness. Instead, they have exposed the diminishing grip of U.S. hegemony and accelerated the emergence of a multipolar world where unilateralism no longer commands submission. China's response to Trump's tariffs is equally telling. Initially targeted with punitive duties reaching 145% on certain goods, Beijing did not fold. Instead, it recalibrated. By diversifying its trade relationships and reducing reliance on the U.S. market—now only accounting for 12% of China's total exports—China insulated itself from American economic warfare. State propaganda turned Trump into a laughingstock, nicknaming him “Tariff Grandpa” and mocking U.S. inflation, while Chinese consumers embraced patriotic boycotts and switched from iPhones to Huawei. More importantly, China didn't come begging. Instead, it issued its own ultimatum: all tariffs must be removed, ad initio, or there will be no negotiations. Trump's boast that President Xi would come “running on his knees” proved a fantasy. The tables have turned. Today, Trump's team is the one chasing a deal while China plays hardball with its own set of strategic levers—like restricting rare earth exports vital to U.S. tech and defense. Trump's tariff strategy was initially framed as a corrective measure against trade deficits and so-called unfair practices, especially targeting China. But soon, the net widened to include America's closest allies—Canada, Mexico, and the European Union. Steel and aluminum tariffs on Canada, for example, struck at the heart of a nation that sends 75% of its exports to the U.S., risking over 2.5 million jobs and nearly 20% of its GDP. To many Canadians, this was akin to a trusted firefighter torching their home and then demanding they hand over the

deed for the promise of rebuilding. Canada, once America's most dependable partner, struck back with retaliatory tariffs on \$155 billion worth of U.S. goods—from coffee and cars to ketchup and orange juice. Simultaneously, consumer prices in the U.S. rose due to higher import costs, pushing inflation up and GDP growth down. According to independent economic analyses, Trump's tariffs contributed to a nearly 3% hit on U.S. GDP and stoked a persistent inflationary trend. The Yale Budget Lab estimated that his blanket tariff regime lifted the effective U.S. tariff rate to its highest level since 1943—an astounding shift in a matter of months. Yet, Trump insists these measures are about reciprocity. “Other nations have taken advantage of us,” he says. But what is rarely acknowledged is that the U.S. has enjoyed an 80-year advantage since it established the dollar as the world's reserve currency post-WWII. That singular privilege has allowed it to run deficits others could not afford. Trump's zero-sum worldview ignores this history, bulldozing through nuanced economic relationships in favor of brute-force diplomacy. What he and his acolytes misunderstand is that trust—not fear—is the bedrock of global trade. When the U.S. unilaterally imposes tariffs on allies and tears up treaties like the USMCA, it shatters that trust. Trump has turned America's traditional leadership role into a transactional, coercive enterprise. As a result, even America's friends are turning elsewhere. In 2024, China overtook the U.S. in trade volume with the European Union—€856 billion versus €822 billion—a symbolic but significant shift in global allegiances. Meanwhile, Europe, another target of Trump's scorn, has closed ranks. His attacks on NATO, his support for authoritarian-leaning figures like Viktor Orbán, and his lecturing of EU leaders by political novices like JD Vance have unified the continent in resistance. They are no longer willing to accept the U.S. as the sole arbiter of global order. What Trump saw as leverage turned into alienation. A once-cohesive transatlantic alliance now navigates its future with less dependence on Washington. This unraveling of global goodwill is compounded by economic damage

at home. Tariffs don't make America stronger—they hurt American families and businesses. One importer, who once paid \$26,000 in annual tariffs, now faces a \$346,000 bill due to the new 104% tariff on Chinese goods. Small manufacturers have seen input costs skyrocket. And while some champions of re-industrialization argue for building local supply chains, the short-term impact is crushing. Trump's protectionism may eventually lead to a more roboticized, domestic manufacturing base—but at what social and economic cost? Far from creating a golden age, Trump's trade policies are inviting stagflation—a toxic combination of stagnant growth and rising prices. This chaos has eroded America's standing, both economically and diplomatically. At a time when coordinated responses to climate change, AI governance, and global debt crises are desperately needed, Trump's America is retreating into isolationism and infighting. The irony is brutal. The tariffs meant to punish foreign adversaries have instead punished domestic consumers. The trade wars meant to lower deficits have likely widened them. The vision of renewed American strength has manifested as global disillusionment. And the promise to bring adversaries to heel has revealed an unsettling truth: the world is no longer America's to command. What remains now is the wreckage of broken agreements, the fraying of alliances, and the slow but steady realization that the 21st century will not be defined by a single superpower. The multipolar world has arrived—with China, the EU, and even smaller economies like Canada standing their ground. America still matters, immensely so, but it must lead by example, not coercion. Trump's tariffs have done what no global coalition could achieve: they've exposed the limits of American power. And so, as the dust settles on Trump's tariff regime, one fact becomes clear—economic nationalism may win elections, but it rarely wins wars.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)  
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# Unilateral power in the multipolar world

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Ironically, efforts to integrate former adversaries into the liberal order have inadvertently empowered them. Russia and China have exploited the openness of Western institutions to further revisionist agendas, engaging in coercive diplomacy, territorial aggression and economic statecraft. Russia leverages financial networks for illicit capital flows, energy as a tool of geopolitical coercion and disinformation to erode democratic resilience. China, for its part, has employed massive...

SINCE the conclusion of the Cold War, the United States has grappled with a pivotal foreign policy dichotomy: whether to maintain its role as the principal architect and guarantor of the liberal international order or to recalibrate its global posture in response to the emergent multipolarity of the international system. This strategic tension was notably intensified during the administration of President Donald J. Trump, policies are marked by protectionist tariffs reminiscent of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act (1930), reductions in foreign aid, disregard for long-standing allies and provocative territorial propositions served not so much as a departure from historical trends as the culmination of latent structural transformations in U.S. grand strategy. Trump's foreign policy direction, while dramatic, functioned primarily as an accelerant to pre-existing currents rather than a novel strategic formulation. The shift toward unilateralism is driven by a combination of strategic fatigue, structural economic transformations, domestic political pressures and evolving global power dynamics. This trajectory necessitates a critical inquiry: not whether the United States will continue to act unilaterally but the manner and strategic rationale by which such behavior unfolds. The imperatives underpinning this strategic shift are no longer purely theoretical. Understanding their causes is essential for crafting a coherent and sustainable policy framework. Left unmoderated, the unilateral turn threatens to destabilize the global order and diminish the foundational pillars of U.S. hegemony. Yet, if properly channeled, these forces may offer the potential for a recalibrated foreign policy that maintains key liberal principles while jettisoning the overextensions associated with liberal internationalism. Despite recurring narratives of American decline, the United States retains substantial structural advantages. Its consumer market rivals the aggregate demand of the eurozone and China and it dominates the international financial system: over half of global trade and approximately 90 percent of international financial transactions are denominated in U.S. dollars. This economic centrality underpins Washington's capacity to enforce punitive sanctions. Moreover, the U.S. economy is relatively insulated from global economic disruptions, with exports constituting only 11 percent of its GDP substantially lower than the global average. The technological and financial sectors also underscore U.S. preeminence, with American firms capturing a dominant share of global venture capital and profits in strategic industries such as semiconductors, aerospace and biotechnology. Though the United States depends on China for certain industrial inputs (e.g., base chemicals, rare earths and generic pharmaceuticals), the asymmetry of dependence strongly favors Washington, particularly in

high-end technologies and energy security. Militarily, the United States possesses unparalleled global reach, capable of projecting force across vast distances. It maintains defense agreements with approximately 70 nations, encompassing a third of global economic output and a fifth of the world's population. This extensive network of alliances, intelligence cooperation and logistical superiority provides Washington with the strategic flexibility to reshape or even disengage from international norms and frameworks. Conversely, a recalibrated approach anchored in selective engagement could permit Washington to shed the unsustainable burdens of liberal hegemony while preserving the foundational strengths of a liberal order rooted in openness, rules-based governance and strategic alliances. Despite recurrent narratives of relative decline, the United States continues to wield significant economic and strategic power. Its consumer market rivals the aggregate scale of China and the Eurozone and it retains disproportionate influence over the global financial system: approximately half of international trade and the vast majority of cross-border financial transactions are denominated in U.S. dollars and routed through American financial institutions, facilitating the use of sanctions as a geopolitical tool. Moreover, the American economy remains relatively insulated from global trade fluctuations, with exports constituting only 11 percent of its GDP, primarily within the North American region. In key sectors such as venture capital, energy, food production and advanced technologies including semiconductors, aerospace and biotechnology U.S. dominance remains unparalleled, far exceeding that of its strategic competitors. While the U.S. is reliant on China for industrial base components, the asymmetry is more consequential for Beijing, which remains dependent on Western markets, technological ecosystems and food and energy imports. Militarily, the United States is unique in its capacity to project power across vast distances. It sustains security commitments with over 70 nations, encompassing a fifth of the global population and a third of global economic output, thereby reinforcing its strategic leverage over global security and rule-setting processes. The imperative for a unilateral turn is further compounded by a growing disillusionment with the legacy institutions of the liberal international order. Originally designed to confront the ideological and geopolitical threats posed by Soviet communism and post-war instability, the liberal order succeeded in securing Western prosperity and political liberalism. However, its foundational rationale has become obsolete. Nations that once relied on U.S. security guarantees such as Germany, Japan, Canada and various Western European states have reduced their defense expenditures, expanded welfare programs and pursued economic entanglements with China and Russia, rendering them ill-prepared

to contribute meaningfully to global stability. Ironically, efforts to integrate former adversaries into the liberal order have inadvertently empowered them. Russia and China have exploited the openness of Western institutions to further revisionist agendas, engaging in coercive diplomacy, territorial aggression and economic statecraft. Russia leverages financial networks for illicit capital flows, energy as a tool of geopolitical coercion and disinformation to erode democratic resilience. China, for its part, has employed massive industrial subsidies to dominate strategic manufacturing sectors and used market access as leverage to pressure adversaries. It has weaponized its participation in global institutions to subvert liberal norms, turning the openness of the liberal order into a vector for strategic subversion. Simultaneously, globalization has fragmented authority within international institutions, producing gridlock and weakening U.S. influence. The proliferation of sovereign actors since the mid-twentieth century has diffused power within forums like the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and the World Bank, often to the detriment of coherent, U.S.-led global governance. Domestically, the economic consequences of globalization have been deeply uneven. Industrial decline, job losses in manufacturing sectors and regional economic disparities have engendered profound socio-political consequences, including rising social distress and growing support for populist and protectionist policies. Electoral mechanisms that amplify rural and deindustrialized constituencies have further entrenched these preferences in national policymaking. Two transformative forces—demographic change and automation—are reshaping the global strategic landscape and accelerating the U.S. shift toward unilateralism. Demographic contractions across Eurasia, coupled with an aging workforce and declining support ratios, are weakening traditional great powers. In contrast, the United States is projected to maintain a growing prime-age workforce throughout the 21st century. At the same time, automation is diminishing the strategic necessity of foreign labor, energy imports and overseas military installations. This asymmetry—between rising U.S. self-sufficiency and global disorder reinforces Washington's incentive to disengage from costly entanglements and prioritize autonomous action. The United States' capacity for unilateralism is not merely a reflection of ideological shift or political leadership, but the manifestation of enduring structural advantages and strategic recalculations in response to a changing global environment. Whether this trend will result in a sustainable recalibration of global order or exacerbate international instability will depend on how this power is exercised and the normative frameworks that guide its application.



## Briefs

## All options on table to preserve...

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the neighboring country would fulfill its international and human rights obligations to look after the prisoners undergoing sentences in its jails. He said the relationship between the two countries was based on certain structural foundations of legal agreements but "if one country is utterly disinterested in any kind of relations, civilised discourse, or interaction, then we also reserve the right to take all necessary measures." Asked about the anti-Pakistan propaganda by the Indian media, Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan called it "lamentable" for levelling accusations without verifiable evidence or credible investigation and creating a situation where their government's position was justified through finger-pointing.

## UN urges Pakistan, India to...

FROM PAGE 01  
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday vowed to hunt down the gunmen responsible for killing 26 men at the popular tourist site of Pahalgam. "I say to the whole world: India will identify, track and punish every terrorist and their backer," Modi said, in his first speech since Tuesday's attack in the Himalayan region. "We will pursue them to the ends of the Earth." Denying any involvement, Islamabad called attempts to link Pakistan to the Pahalgam attack "frivolous" and vowed to respond to any Indian action. "Any threat to Pakistan's sovereignty and to the security of its people will be met with firm reciprocal measures in all domains," a statement from the PM's Office said, after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired the high-level National Security Committee meeting with top military chiefs. Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since its independence in 1947. India still has not fulfilled its promise of holding a UN-mandated plebiscite.

## Senate passes resolution...

FROM PAGE 01  
New Delhi suspended a water-sharing treaty, announced the closure of the main land border crossing with Pakistan, downgraded diplomatic ties, and withdrew visas for Pakistanis. Pakistan, in response, ordered the expulsion of Indian diplomats and military advisers, cancelling visas for Indian nationals, with the exception of Sikh pilgrims — and closing the main border crossing from its side. UN has urged Pakistan and India to show "maximum restraint", saying that any issues between Pakistan and India should be resolved peacefully through meaningful mutual engagement. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar told the House that India had avoided naming Pakistan directly but hinted at it without any evidence. He stated that India's baseless narrative had been politically anticipated.

## US monitoring situation...

FROM PAGE 01  
"We pray for the lives of those lost and for the recovery of the injured and call for the perpetrators of this heinous act to be brought to justice," the State Department spokesperson said. To answer a question about President Trump's first term when he offered to make peace between Pakistan and India, Bruce said: "I'm not going to be remarking on it. I will say nothing more on that situation." "The president and secretary said some things. They made their positions clear. I will not continue with something of that manner." To another question about playing role in trying to defuse tension between India and Pakistan, Bruce said: "It's a rapidly changing situation and we are monitoring it, closely."

## Usman Wazeer secures victory over Indian opponent Eswaran

*His achievements have not only brought global recognition but also immense pride to Pakistan and his native region of Gilgit-Baltistan*

IKRAM ULLAH JOYIA

HIGHLY anticipated due to historic sporting rivalry between Pakistan and India, marks Wazeer's 16th professional fight Pakistan's rising boxing talent Usman Wazeer showcased his dominance in the ring on Thursday by overpowering India's S Eswaran with a technical knockout (TKO) in the opening round of their international ranking match held at Bangkok's World Siam Stadium.

The match, highly anticipated due to the historic sporting rivalry between Pakistan and India, marked Wazeer's 16th professional fight. The 23-year-old extended his undefeated record to an impressive 16-0, with the fight concluding just one minute and 41 seconds into the opening round. As the bell rang, Wazeer wasted no time, launching the first attack that set the



pace of the fight. Eswaran responded with aggression, and the bout quickly turned into an explosive exchange.

However, Wazeer displayed superior technique and composure, landing a series of powerful blows that knocked Eswaran

down twice before the referee stepped in to stop the contest. Dubbed the "Asian Boy," Wazeer has already made waves in the boxing world, having previously secured prestigious titles including the World Youth Title, Asian Title, and Middle East Title. His achievements have not only brought global recognition but also immense pride to Pakistan and his native region of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Following his emphatic win, Wazeer expressed gratitude and delivered a powerful message of unity. "Alhamdulillah for this victory. I'm grateful to Highland Boxing Promotion, my sponsors, and the Sindh Government for their support," he said. He also addressed the growing social media buzz surrounding the match, urging fans on both sides of the border to embrace peace. "I saw posts comparing this to an India-Pakistan war. I sincerely request both nations — we want peace. Let sports bring us together, not divide us," he concluded.

Copa del Rey 2025 final  
Real Madrid vs Barcelona

Barcelona and Real Madrid clash in a mouth-watering King's Cup final featuring the two giants of Spanish football

SPORTS DESK

ARCHRIVALS Barcelona and Real Madrid will meet in an El Clasico for the third time this season when they face off in the Copa del Rey (King's Cup) final. Barcelona will be looking for a hat-trick of wins on Saturday over their fierce foes this 2024-2025 season, having defeated Real 5-2 in the Spanish Super Cup final in January and 4-0 in a LaLiga fixture in October. Barcelona — the Copa's most successful club with 31 trophies — have not made it to the final since 2021 when they beat Athletic Bilbao. Madrid, who will play in their second final in three seasons, won their 20th title against Osasuna in 2023. Saturday's blockbuster showdown will mark the first time in 11 years that Barcelona and Real Madrid have met in a Copa final, and it's the 260th competitive match between the sides. Here's everything you need to know before the clash between



Spain's two football titans: The Copa del Rey final will be played on Saturday. Estadio de La Cartuja in Seville is the venue for the 2025 Copa del Rey final. The stadium, the fifth largest in Spain, has a capacity of 57,600 people and was one of the 11 stadiums used in the multi-country Euro 2020 tournament. Estadio de La Cartuja also hosted the 2024 Copa del Rey final between Athletic Bilbao and Osasuna. Hansi Flick's side have lost just once this year across

all competitions, falling 3-1 to Borussia Dortmund in the second leg of the UEFA Champions League quarter-finals although that did not stop them from sealing their spot in the semifinals. Multiple bookmakers around the world via the Oddschecker platform have Barcelona marked as the shorter-odds favourite to win the Copa, paying out \$2.10 on average for the victory with Real Madrid at \$3.10. Barcelona winning the Cup final keeps open the Catalan giant's am-

bition of winning the 2024-2025 season treble: the Copa del Rey, UEFA Champions League and LaLiga. Barcelona, Spain's last hope in the Champions League, are the tournament front-runner. In LaLiga, Spain's premier league competition, Barcelona sit atop the standings with a four-point lead over Real Madrid with just five matches remaining this season. Real Madrid reached the Copa final after beating Real Sociedad 5-4 on aggregate in the semifinals while Barcelona booked their berth in the title clash by beating Atletico Madrid in the semis with the same scoreline. Athletic Bilbao are the reigning Copa champions, but they were eliminated in the round of 16 by Osasuna. Bilbao's exit ensured there would be no repeat Copa champion since Barcelona won it four years straight from 2015 to 2018. Real Madrid and Barcelona last met in a Copa final in the 2013-2014 season with Real winning 2-1 following goals from Angel di Maria and Gareth Bale.

## Ruben Amorim to make decision on Rashford's future

"So we are really happy because if you put one player on loan, the best thing for us is for them to perform and they are performing"

WEB DESK

MANCHESTER United manager Ruben Amorim is planning to welcome Marcus Rashford back to club at the end of the season following his loan spell at Aston Villa. Amorim is set to make a decision on England international's future, with reports suggesting that Rashford no longer wishes to play for United and is seeking a new contract after being sidelined before his loan move. Amorim confirmed that Rashford will return to the club alongside Antony and Tyrell Malacia, who are currently on loan at Real Betis and PSV Eindhoven, respectively. "All the players that are on loan, they will return and then the club will decide what to do at the end of the season," said Amorim. "The talent of Rashford, the talent of Antony, all these players have talent and they have to put that on the team." "So we are really happy because if you put one player on loan, the best thing for us is for them to perform and they are performing," he added. Rashford has made a strong impact at Villa this season, with four goals and six assists in 17 appearances. His form has earned him a place in England's squad as well. Looking ahead, United will face Bournemouth on Sunday in a crucial Premier League clash as they aim to gather points and improve their position in the table. They will meet Athletic Bilbao in the first leg of Europa League semi-final. Amorim emphasized the importance of treating every match as crucial: "We need to have that feeling every game here is important and we have to win every game. It's important not to lose." "Of course, you see the context. We are going to face this game with best team. We had a full week to prepare, some of the players didn't play against Wolves so to recover players is not a bad thing. I will try to prepare for this game and try and win the next one," he concluded.

## Shehbaz demands 'transparency' in PIA...

FROM PAGE 01

He also directed the relevant authorities to ensure the privatisation within the given time frame. Emphasising the importance of roadshows and fully engaging investors in the privatisation process, the premier directed that in order to ensure transparency, the privatisation and all future state-owned enterprises must be broadcast live on television and digital platforms. The meeting was told that a comprehensive investor outreach strategy had been developed in collaboration with the consultant and was being fully implemented. The prime minister was also informed about the criteria of the bidding, the required time period and the conditions to participate in the bidding process. During his interaction with the media following the meeting, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation Muhammad Ali assured that the future of around 6,900 employees of the national airline was safe. "We have learnt from the past mistakes," he said, adding that the bidders would be given a 60-day time to review accounts. "The bidding company for the national airline must have a revenue of Rs200bn in 2 years," he said, adding that the companies participating in the bid must have Rs30bn in cash or shares. He further said that the 18% GST imposed on the lease or purchase of aircraft had been abolished. The adviser clarified that no provincial government can take part in the privatisation process of the PIA.

## Aurangzeb terms climate change...

FROM PAGE 01

The fund was aimed at assisting vulnerable developing countries in responding to economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events Muhammad Aurangzeb also underlined the urgency of operationalizing the Fund and the importance of integrity of the whole process with adequate checks and balances. He urged the need for speedy disbursements under the Fund unlike the experience of the least developed and the most vulnerable countries with the existing climate funds. Meanwhile, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting with IMF Director for Middle East and Central Asia Jihad Azour in Washington DC. During the meeting, the Finance Minister thanked the IMF for reaching a Staff-Level Agreement on the first review under Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and a new arrangement under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). The Finance Minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to stay the course and further entrench the progress achieved over the past one and a half years. He said Fitch's upgrade of Pakistan's sovereign credit ratings was an external validation of the successful reforms undertaken by the country.

## President Zardari lauds NSC measures

FROM PAGE 01

He said the committee had truly represented the aspirations of the nation, and the whole country stood united in support of its decisions. He further stated that India's baseless allegations and illogical actions had no justification. On the occasion, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqi remarked that the enemy should be in no delusion as Pakistan's defence is invincible.

## 4 security officials martyred in Quetta

FROM PAGE 01

off the area while injured have been shifted to hospital for treatment. A search operation has also been launched in the area to arrest the suspects.

## AFP Fails to send athletes to international event

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Another instance of incompetence has surfaced from the Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP), as it failed to send the country's top athletes to participate in the 4th edition of the prestigious Imam Ali Reza International Athletics Cup, currently being held in Mashhad, Iran. According to details, the AFP had initially confirmed participation with the event organizers, but at the last moment, withdrew the team without any official explanation. This, despite the fact that the organizers were offering free accommodation, local transportation, and other essential facilities. The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) had provided extensive support to the AFP, including arranging training camps and issuing the No Objection Certificate (NOC) required for international participation. The event kicked off on April 25, yet the federation failed to follow through, once again displaying organizational inefficiency. An eight-member Pakistani contingent was set to take part in the competition. The athletes had been rigorously preparing for the past month with the support of the PSB. The squad included top athletes such as Shajar Abbas, Mohammad Ikram, Mohammad Yasir, Sharoz Khan, Abdul Moeed, Mohammad Ismail, and Mohammad Akhtar, with Muhammad Sajjad serving as team manager.

## Adam Milne Ruled Out of HBL PSL 10

DNA

LAHORE: Fast bowler Adam Milne will miss the rest of the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 10 due to a PCL injury in his knee. The injury occurred during the team's second match against Lahore Qalanders earlier this month. Despite undergoing a structured recovery process, medical advice has determined that Milne won't be able to continue in the tournament. The Kiwi pacer has been with the squad since the injury. As a replacement, Karachi Kings has signed Saad Baig, a talented wicketkeeper-batter from Karachi and captain of Pakistan's U19 team. Saad has already played two matches for Karachi Kings this season, scoring 29 runs.

## KSL Trials in Rawalpindi

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Kashmir Supreme League (KSL) trials were successfully held at the Ayub National Park Cricket Ground in Rawalpindi. The event was attended by Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir and Patron-in-Chief of KSL, who officially kicked off the trials with a short cricket match. A panel of esteemed selectors, including former national players Yasir Hameed, Shahid Nazir, Aamir Nazir, and trailblazing cricketer Natalia Pervaz, oversaw the trials. Over 500 talented players from the region participated in the trials, showcasing their skills and vying for a spot in the KSL. The selected players will be drafted into the Kashmir Supreme League, while those who don't make the cut will be included in the Future Development Program. This initiative aims to nurture young talent and provide opportunities for growth and development in the sport. The KSL trials mark a significant step in promoting cricket in the region and providing a platform for local players to shine.



## Chris Eubank Jr fined £375,000 after missing the weight

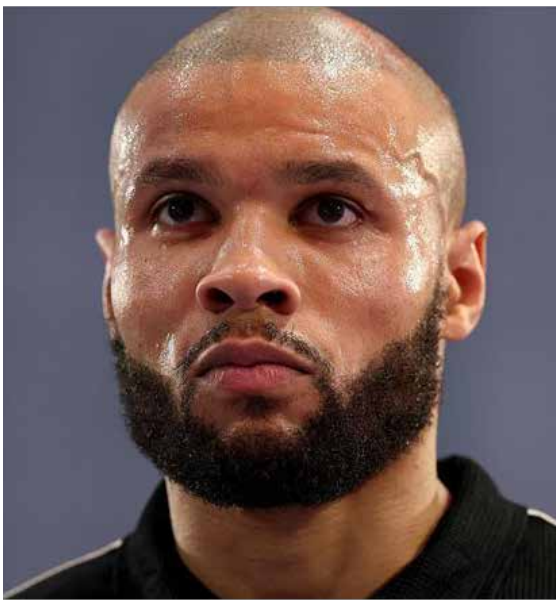
*Losing water weight close to the fight allows them to refuel with food and water much easier. Eubank is the more experienced fighter at middleweight but usually puts on about 14lb after a weigh-in*

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Chris Eubank Jr will be fined £375,000 after missing the weight by just 0.05lb for Saturday's grudge match with Conor Benn. The 35-year-old weighed 0.2lb over the 11st 6lb limit on the first attempt and was still too heavy the second time. A trimmed and toned Benn — who has operated at welterweight for most of his career — came in lighter than expected at 11st 2lb. Eubank and Benn are both bound by a rehydration clause that prohibits them from weighing more than 12st 1lb on Saturday morning. "Show me the money", Benn, who will receive the fine, posted in a video on social media. Both men are expected to earn a seven figure purse for the fight.

The weigh-in took place behind closed doors at a London hotel on Friday. Afterwards, Eubank posted a video of himself - titled 'Pain is temporary... glory is forever' - which was taken earlier in the day. He was clearly in discomfort and in a sweatshirt trying to lose the weight. There will be a ceremonial weigh-in, which will be open to the public, in Islington on Friday evening. The fight is due to take place at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Eubank's weight has been a major talking point in the build-up and particularly during fight week. Benn's team feel the rehydration clause makes this more of level playing field. Fighters generally shed some fat over the period of their training camp to get close to the agreed or stipulated weight limit. Before the weigh-in, which takes place

a day before the fight night, they may dehydrate to lose the final bit of weight. Losing water weight close to the fight allows them to refuel with food and water much easier. Eubank is the more experienced fighter at middleweight but usually puts on about 14lb after a weigh-in.



There will be a further fine if Eubank misses the weight again. Before the weigh-in, he said his two options were to either put on what he usually would and then cut 4lb early on Saturday or remain in the 10lb window. The pair were set to fight in October 2022, reigniting a family rivalry after their fathers shared two bouts in the 1990s, before the fight was cancelled because Benn failed a drugs test. Benn called Eubank "fat boy" at Thursday's news conference. Promoter Eddie Hearn has also previously questioned whether Eubank would make the middleweight limit. Eubank arrived an hour later than the scheduled 11:00 BST start time on Friday, sparking rumours he may be struggling at the weight. Eubank was fined £100,000 for slapping Benn with an egg at a news conference in February. He has also voluntarily spent £50,000 on compensating boxers who were supposed to fight on the cancelled 2022 card. Eubank has missed the weight by the smallest of margins, the weight of a single AA battery, which makes little change to the competitive element of this fight. This is a bout already with a significant weight disparity and this incident - and Benn coming in lighter than anticipated - has only shown a brighter light on that. But we have to wonder what physical and mental impact this has had on Eubank. How much of a toll has that gruelling cut taken on his body? And will he have similar trouble in trying to make the 12st 1lb limit tomorrow morning? The psychological edge and momentum is certainly with Benn. We can expect some goading and taunting at the ceremonial way in this evening.



## Briefs

## SBP injects Rs 11.855t in the market

KARACHI: The central bank, Friday, injected Rs 11,854.95 billion in the market through Reverse Repo Purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO). The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) conducted the Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) for 7 and 14-day tenors on April 25, 2025 and accepted an amount of Rs 11,597.45 billion against 35 quotes while another Rs 257.5 billion were injected through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based OMO. For the Reverse Repo Purchase, the central bank received 23 quotes for the 14-day tenor cumulatively offering Rs 11,555.4 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.03% to 12.13%. SBP accepted Rs 11,150 billion against all the 23 bids at 12.03% rate of return. Total amount offered at 12.03% was RS 3,095 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs 2,689 billion on a pro-rata basis. Moreover, the SBP also received 12 bids for a 7-day tenor cumulatively offering Rs 447.45 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.09 to 12.12 percent.—APP

## PSX turns around to bullish trend

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Friday, gaining 449.53 points, a positive change of 0.39 percent, closing at 115,469.35 points as compared to 115,019.82 points on last trading day. A total of 471,072,967 shares were traded during the day as compared to 506,702,532 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 27.310 billion against Rs 24.488 billion on the last trading day. As many as 441 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 182 of them recorded gains and 204 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 55 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 22,789,497 shares at Rs 1.29 per share, Power Cement with 21,965,614 shares at Rs 14.28 per share and Sui South Gas with 21,567,163 shares at Rs 40.49 per share.—APP

## Rupee gains 09 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday appreciated by 09 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.97 against the previous day's closing of Rs 281.06. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 281.25 and Rs 282.75, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.08 to close at Rs 318.98 against the last day's closing of Rs 320.06, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 02 paise and closed at Rs 1.95, whereas a decrease of 35 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 373.47 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 373.82.—APP

## China considers exempting some goods from US tariffs

Pakistan scientists granted access to China's Chang'e-5 mission

DUBAI: China is considering exempting some US imports from its 125 percent tariffs and is asking businesses to provide lists of goods that could be eligible in the biggest sign yet that Beijing is worried about the economic fallout from its trade war with Washington. A Ministry of Commerce taskforce is collecting lists of items that could be exempted from tariffs and is asking companies to submit their own requests, according to a source who spoke on condition of anonymity. Financial news magazine Caijing reported on Friday citing sources that Beijing was preparing to include eight semiconductor-related items, although no memory chips. A list of 131 categories of products eligible for exemptions was circulating widely on social media

and among businesses and trade groups on Friday. Reuters could not verify the list, whose items ranged from vaccines and chemicals to jet engines. Repeated phone calls to China's customs department were not answered. Customs and the Ministry of Commerce did not immediately respond to faxed questions. Bloomberg first reported China was considering tariff exemptions on Friday. The exemptions signal that, like Washington, Beijing is deeply concerned about the economic pain rippling across the country as the world's two largest economies decouple. While Washington has said the current status quo is economically untenable and already offered tariff exemptions to some electronic goods, China has repeatedly said it is willing

to fight to the end unless the US lifts its tariffs. But beneath the bombast, China's economy is entering the trade war flirting with deflation. Demand is weak and consumer spending and sentiment have never properly recovered from the pandemic levels. The government is pushing tariff-hit exporters to pivot to local markets, but companies say profits are lower, demand weaker and customers less reliable. Exemptions are a bigger gesture of support, although by allowing some trade to resume, they also reduce the pain for the US economy and take some pressure off the White House. Moreover, The China National Space Administration (CNSA) has announced that scientists from institutions in Pakistan, France, Germany, Japan, the

United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (U.S.) have been granted the opportunity to borrow lunar samples collected by the Chang'e-5 mission for scientific research. At a ceremony for China's Space Day in Shanghai, the agency announced that seven institutions from six countries have been authorized to borrow the lunar samples. The authorized institutions include the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) the Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris (IPGP) in France, the University of Cologne in Germany, Osaka University in Japan, the Open University in UK, Brown University in U.S., and the State University of New York at Stony Brook in the United States. In 2020, China's Chang'e-5 mission

retrieved samples from the moon weighing about 1,731 grams. Shan Zhongde, head of the CNSA, said China's lunar exploration program has always adhered to the principles of equality, mutual benefits, peaceful utilization and win-win cooperation, sharing achievements with the international community. He added that CNSA will continue to accept international applications for lunar sample research, expressing hope that global scientists will make new discoveries that expand human knowledge and benefit humanity. In November 2023, CNSA opened applications for international researchers to borrow Chang'e-5 lunar samples. By the end of December 2023, it had received 24 applications from 11 countries and international organizations.—DNA

## Farooq pledges to enhance Paki-South Africa ties

ISLAMABAD: Malik Mohammad Farooq, High Commissioner-designate to South Africa, has expressed his strong commitment to exploring new avenues for promoting bilateral trade and exports between Pakistan and South Africa. He shared this vision during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), where he held a productive meeting with ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi. Highlighting the immense potential of the South African market for Pakistani businesses, Malik Mohammad Farooq said that his interaction with the ICCI leadership had invigorated his resolve to stay closely connected with the Chamber, particularly due to its distinguished status as part of the Federal Chamber. He assured full support in facilitating enhanced business linkages and co-operation. The High Commissioner-designate lauded the ICCI's proactive efforts to strengthen economic ties with friendly nations, noting that he would actively engage with the South African business community to foster stronger bilateral trade and economic relations. Earlier, ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi warmly welcomed the High Commissioner-designate and emphasized Pakistan's keen interest in deepening trade and investment partnerships with South Africa across both traditional and non-traditional sectors.—APP

## 2.2m hectares cotton cultivation target set

ISLAMABAD: The government has set an ambitious target to cultivate cotton over 2.2 million hectares of land during the current Kharif season (2025-26). This initiative aims to meet local demand while contributing to the development and progress of farming communities across the country. The target for cotton production has been set at 10.18 million bales, with efforts focused on ensuring the availability of certified high-yielding seeds and providing adequate supplies of agricultural inputs in key sowing areas, according to an official from the Ministry of National Food Security and Research. In a related development, the Federal Committee on Agriculture has also established production targets for other major crops, including rice, maize, and sugarcane, as well as pulses such as mung, mash, and chilies. For the current season, rice will be cultivated over 3 million hectares, with a production target of over 9.17 million tons. Maize cultivation will cover 1.5 million hectares, aiming for a yield of 9.7 million tons. Sugarcane production is expected to reach 80.3 million tons from 1.1 million hectares of land, addressing domestic sugar needs. Additionally, targets for pulses such as mung, mash, and chilies have been set. For the Rabi season 2024-25, onion production is projected at 2.7 million tons from 0.17 million hectares, reflecting a 15.7% increase in output. The area under onion cultivation has also grown by 17.3% compared to last year.—APP



RAWALPINDI: Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan called on Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi and discussed steps to strengthen mutual cooperation in Islamabad on Friday .

## Saudi, Indian militaries complete first army-to-army talks

NEW DELHI: The first army-to-army talks between the Indian Army and the Royal Saudi Land Forces have resulted in an annual defense cooperation plan that includes joint drills, expert exchanges, and operational logistics, India's military said on Friday. The talks took place in New Delhi on April 23-24. "Discussions focused on the annual defense cooperation plan, covering joint exercise Sada Tanseeg, training, military education, domain expert exchanges and engagements in areas of mutual interest," the public information arm of the Indian Ministry of Defense said on X. "Both sides also explored avenues of collaboration in operational logistics, battlefield management systems & niche technologies to enhance interoperability and capability development," it said. The Sada Tanseeg exercise, the first edition of which took place in Rajasthan in January and February, aims to enhance interoperability and joint operational capabilities between the two nations' land forces, particularly in semi-desert terrain. The exercise involved 90 troops from both sides focusing on training for operations under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which pertains to actions regarding threats to peace, breaches of peace and acts of aggression. The talks in Delhi followed Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Saudi Arabia and meetings with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman earlier this week. During the visit the two sides expanded the Saudi-Indian Strategic Partnership Council to include a ministerial committee for defense cooperation and agreed to enhance defense industry collaboration. "It is significant that the first army-to-army staff level talks were held immediately after the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the crown prince, who decided to form a ministerial-level defense cooperation committee to give a push to already deepening defense and strategic relations between India and Saudi Arabia," defense and strategic affairs expert Ranjit Kumar told Arab News. "The two countries have already conducted joint army exercises in 2021 and 2023. Later, the navies of the two nations have also organized two rounds of joint naval exercises. These are indicative of growing proximity between the Indian and Saudi defense forces, which may lead to new strategic equations in the region.—DNA

## Pak-China joint working group on agriculture held in Beijing

ISLAMABAD: The fourth meeting of the China-Pakistan Joint Working Group on Agriculture was held in Beijing, China Economic Net reported on Friday. The meeting was co-chaired by senior officials from the Department of International Cooperation of China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Federal Secretary of Pakistan's Ministry of National Food Security and Research. The meeting primarily reviewed the progress of the first batch of agricultural projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), approved the second batch of proposed projects, and announced the establishment of the China-Pakistan Agricultural Technology Working Group. Both sides reached a consensus on establishing joint laboratories and signing a Memorandum of Understanding on tropical agriculture cooperation in near future. Other topics of discussion included deepening collaboration in fisheries, agricultural mechanization, and related fields. Approximately 60 representatives from the agricultural authorities, research institutes, local governments, enterprises, and embassies of both countries participated in the meeting through both online and offline channels. With strong support from the agricultural departments and diplomatic missions of both nations, two projects - Sichuan Litong's chili pepper cultivation demonstration base and Guangxi Royal Dairy's China-Pakistan buffalo breeding and dairy processing initiative - have delivered remarkable results as part of the first phase of CPEC agricultural cooperation. Both projects have been lauded by Chinese and Pakistani authorities and are regarded as flagship examples of bilateral agricultural collaboration. Looking ahead, four additional high-performing partners—Qingta Hesheng of Wuhan, Jinghua Seed Industry of Xinjiang, Rumber of Shandong, and the Crop Science Institute of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences - have joined the second phase of CPEC agricultural projects. In post-meeting interviews, company representatives expressed optimism about jointly cultivating more "small yet refined" model projects. These efforts are expected to inject fresh momentum into the high-quality development of the second phase of CPEC and contribute to a new chapter in building the China-Pakistan community with a shared future.—DNA

## Russian general killed by car bomb near Moscow

BALASHIKHA, Russia: An explosive device ripped through a parked car near Moscow on Friday killing a senior Russian general, investigators said, in an attack that resembled previous killings claimed by Ukraine. Authorities named the victim as General-lieutenant Yaroslav Moskalik, deputy head of the main operational directorate of the military's General Staff, which is in charge of army operations. Kyiv had not commented on the attack, which bore the hallmarks of previous assassinations of military figures and high-profile backers of the Kremlin's offensive over the last three years. Ukraine has called some of them "legitimate targets" and sees the attacks as retribution for Moscow's military campaign, which has resulted in tens

of thousands of people killed. Russia's Investigative Committee said it had opened a murder probe after a Volkswagen Golf blew up outside a block of flats in the town of Balashikha, east of Moscow. "Our military figure was killed as a result of a terrorist attack," Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said. The general's body lay on the ground close to the front door of a block of flats and a few meters from the charred remains of a white car whose rear section was torn away, footage from the scene posted by the Investigative Committee showed. Several investigators were working at the scene. Police had cordoned off the site on Friday, with ambulances surrounding the area, an AFP reporter saw. A body lying on the ground could be seen from the upper floors of surrounding buildings. Locals said they heard a loud blast at around 10:45 a.m. (0745 GMT).= "The explosion was very strong, it even gave me heart pain," Lyudmila, a 50-year-old who lives nearby told AFP. = The killing appeared similar to previous attacks claimed by Kyiv on figures linked to Russia's three-year offensive on the country. Ukraine's secret services said last December it was behind the assassination of the head of the Russian military's chemical weapons department—APP

## UN report warns of global social crisis by inequality, distrust

UNITED NATIONS: Billions of people around the world are living in fear of job loss or struggling to find work, as economic instability, conflict, and climate shocks combine to erode global security, a new UN report has warned. According to the World Social Report 2025 launched on Thursday, the sobering sentiment indicates a widespread lack of confidence in the future. Despite people living longer, being better educated and more connected than ever before, many believe that life today is worse than it was 50 years ago. Close to 60 per cent of people surveyed on life satisfaction reported that they were "struggling" with a further 12 per cent describing themselves as "suffering", the report notes. According to the report, economic instability is no longer limited to the world's poorest regions. Even in high-income countries, rising job

uncertainty, gig work and the digital transition are contributing to this trend. These jobs may offer flexibility but often come at the cost of security and rights – reducing workers to mere service providers in a commodified labour market. The insecurities are further compounded by an alarming rise in informal employment. In many low and middle-income countries, jobs with no safety net remains the norm, locking workers into cycles of low pay, instability, and zero benefits. Even those who manage to enter formal employment face significant risks of being pushed back into the informal sector, especially during downturns. For over 2.8 billion people living on less than \$6.85 a day – the threshold for extreme poverty – even a small shock can send people into extreme poverty and any escapes from poverty are often temporary," the

report warns. The situation is further complicated by rising climate change impacts and worsening conflicts, further undermining local economies and deepening inequality, especially in the developing world. As financial pressures mount and stability erodes, public confidence in institutions – and in one another – has also taken a severe hit, particularly among young people. Over half the world's population (57 per cent) now expresses low levels of confidence in government. Among those born in the 21st century, trust levels are even lower – raising concerns about long-term civic disengagement and political instability. People's trust in one another is also eroding. Fewer than 30 per cent of people in countries with available data believe that most others can be trusted, undermining social cohesion and complicating efforts for collective action.—APP

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## Briefs

War will  
leave nothing  
behind: Saad

## BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: PML-N senior leader and former federal minister Khawaja Saad-Rafique has warned that if tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, Pakistan and India, spiral out of control, the consequences will be catastrophic for both sides. Commenting on India's reaction to the Pahalgalam attack, Rafique-criticised the Modi government's finger-pointing at Pakistan without concrete evidence, calling it a reckless and irresponsible act. He slammed India's unilateral withdrawal from the Indus Waters Treaty and other hostile moves, stating they have only added fuel to the fire. "We won't be the first to pull the trigger, but if provoked, Pakistan will respond with full might," he asserted. Rafique emphasised that meaningful dialogue was the need of the hour. "War has never been a silver bullet. We must bite the bullet, sit down, and iron out our differences," he concluded.

Interests  
of smaller  
provinces must  
be protected

## SHAHMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Information Adviser Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said on Friday that the interests of smaller provinces should be given special consideration when it comes to canal-related matters. In a statement, Saif said that the Chashma Right Bank Lift Canal project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should not be linked with new canal projects in the Council of Common Interests (CCI), adding that approval for Chashma Right Bank Canal (Lift-cum-Gravity Project) was given by CCI in 1991. He further stated that, in light of the CCI's decision, canals were constructed in the other three provinces, but implementation of the project in KP has not yet materialised. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also assured 35% funding for the project. The provincial adviser added that any attempt to make the Chashma Right Bank Canal project controversial in the new canal dispute would be strongly opposed. "This project will help bring millions of acres of barren land in the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under cultivation," he added.

Aliya Hamza  
released  
from jail

## DNA

JHELUM: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and PTI Punjab chief organizer Aliya Hamza has been released from District Jail Jhelum on Thursday, Dunya News reported. Aliya Hamza left for Lahore under tight security soon after her release. Judicial Magistrate Qamar Abbas had approved Aliya Hamza's bail yesterday against surety bonds worth Rs. 100,000. On April 18, Aliya Hamza, the leader of PTI, was detained in Rawalpindi in a case registered at the Airport Police Station along with six party colleagues. They were accused of interfering in government affairs, blocking roads, and throwing stones at police officers.

Syria's new  
FM appears  
at the UN

NEW YORK: Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Al-Shibani watched as his country's new flag was raised outside the United Nations headquarters in New York Friday ahead of a UN Security Council briefing. It is the first public appearance by a high-ranking Syrian government official in the United States since the fall of former President Bashar Assad in a lightning rebel offensive in December. The three-starred flag that had previously been used by opposition groups has replaced the two-starred flag of the Assad era as the country's official emblem. — Agencies

Bangladesh marks 54th National Day  
in Islamabad with a diplomatic milestone

This year's celebration was particularly notable for the high-level Pakistani participation.

For the first time in recent years, five to six federal ministers, senators, and senior government officials attended the reception, reflecting a thaw in diplomatic ties, especially after the recent political change in Dhaka following the fall of the Hasina government



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The 54th National Day of Bangladesh was celebrated with great fervor in Islamabad, marking a significant moment in Pakistan-Bangladesh diplomatic relations. The event, hosted by the High Commission of Bangladesh, saw an unprecedented attendance of high-level dignitaries, signaling a positive shift in bilateral ties. Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif attended the reception as the chief

guest. In his remarks, he emphasized the cordial nature of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations and expressed Islamabad's keen interest in further expanding political, economic, and cultural co-operation with Dhaka. "We value our relations with Bangladesh and look forward to deepening our engagement in various sectors," said the Defence Minister, highlighting the historic and cultural connections that bind the two nations. Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan, Iqbal Hussain, also addressed the gathering. He underscored Bangladesh's desire to main-



tain strong and friendly relations with Pakistan, while stressing the need for enhanced cooperation and mutual understanding. This year's celebration was particularly notable for the high-level Pakistani participation. For the first time in recent years, five to six federal ministers, senators, and senior government officials attended the reception, reflecting a thaw in diplomatic ties, especially after the recent political change in Dhaka following the fall of the Hasina government. In a diplomatic surprise, Indian Chargé d'Affaires Ms. Geetika Srivastava also shared the stage with

Pakistani ministers, despite the ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan. Her presence was seen as a rare gesture of diplomatic courtesy. The event was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, civil society, media, and business community, and featured cultural elements from Bangladesh, including traditional cuisine, making it a memorable evening. As Bangladesh continues to strengthen its international presence, the celebration in Islamabad served as a reminder of the importance of regional harmony and the potential for South Asian nations to engage constructively.

US envoy highlights  
trade opportunities  
on Karachi visit

CDA Baker also met with Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and other provincial officials to explore opportunities for closer economic collaboration. Their discussions focused on fair and reciprocal trade, energy cooperation, and innovation in science and technology

KARACHI: U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker visited Karachi April 23-24 to boost trade ties and strengthen business partnerships between the United States and Pakistan. During her visit, CDA Baker met with senior executives from leading Pakistani companies to discuss economic trends, investment opportunities, and ways to grow commercial cooperation. Topics included Paki-

stan's engagement with the IMF, efforts to improve the business climate, and regional trade. She underscored the importance of private-sector leadership in driving economic growth, saying, "The United States values its economic partnership with Pakistan and sees strong business partnerships as key to building shared prosperity." CDA Baker also met with Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and other provincial officials to explore opportunities for closer economic collaboration. Their discussions focused on fair and reciprocal trade, energy cooperation, and innovation in science and technology. In a meeting with the American Business Council, CDA Baker spoke with representatives of U.S.-linked companies about Pakistan's growing tech sector and the promise it holds for exports and job creation. "Pakistan's expanding tech sector shows how open, fair and competitive markets can drive innovation, boost exports, and create jobs that benefit both our countries," she said. The visit highlighted new opportunities to expand U.S.-Pakistan cooperation in trade, investment, and business – helping to grow exports, attract investment and create jobs that will make both countries stronger, safer, and more prosperous. — DNA

World must fear prospect of  
war between 2 nuclear states

"If there is an all-out attack or something like that, then there will be an all-out war," says defence minister

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has drawn the international community's attention towards the growing tensions between India and Pakistan, saying that the world should be "worried" about the potential for a full-scale conflict between the two nuclear-armed nations. The minister warned that tensions with India over a deadly shooting in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) could escalate into an "all-out war", in an interview with British news channel. The warning follows the deadly gun attack in the IOJK, where 26 tourists were shot dead at a scenic location in the Pahalgalam area. The victims included one Nepali national. India's government has blamed Pakistan for the attack, a claim that Islamabad vehemently denied and also termed as a "false flag operation". Asif stressed that Pakistan's military was "prepared for any eventuality" amid growing diplomatic tensions. "We will measure our response to whatever is initiated by India. It would be a measured response," he said. "If there is an all-out attack or something like that, then obviously there will be an all-out war." However, he expressed hope that the situation could still be resolved through negotiations.

When asked whether the global community should be concerned, the defence minister responded in affirmative. "The clash between two nuclear powers is always worrisome... If things get wrong, there could be a tragic outcome of this confrontation." Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed to pursue those behind the attack "to the ends of the Earth." When asked whether he blamed India for the shooting, Asif said: "Yeah, absolutely. They create these situations." Despite the rising tensions, he added: "We should be solving our problems through negotiations." Earlier, Asif said that Pakistan has absolutely nothing to do with it, as Pakistan rejects terrorism in all its forms and everywhere. He said that India should investigate the Pahalgalam incident as merely levelling allegations won't absolve them of responsibility. In a blatant response to the Pahalgalam attack, India announced the unilateral decision to suspend the six-decade-old Indus Water Treaty and also taking other steps against Pakistan in the aftermath of an attack on tourists in the occupied territory. To counter India's controversial measures taken by the government in New Delhi, the National Security Committee (NSC) warned that any move by India to divert the flow of water lawfully belonging to Pakistan will be "considered an act of war".

Ukraine may have to temporarily  
give up land for peace: Klitschko

Klitschko is now one of the most senior Ukrainian politicians to indicate publicly that his country may have to give up territory, albeit temporarily

## FOREIGN DESK

KIEV: The mayor of Kyiv, Vitali Klitschko, has told the BBC that Ukraine may have to give up land as part of a peace deal with Russia, amid a growing pressure from President Donald Trump to accept territorial concessions. "One of the scenarios is... to give up territory. It's not fair. But for the peace, temporary peace, maybe it can be a solution, temporary," he said in response to questions from the BBC. But the 53-year-old former boxing champion-turned politician stressed that the Ukrainian people would "never accept occupation" by Russia. He was speaking hours after a Russian missile-and-drone attack on Kyiv killed 12 people and injured more than 80. It was one of the deadliest Russian assaults on the Ukrainian capital in months. Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and Moscow currently controls about 20% of Ukrainian territory. Klitschko is now one of the most senior Ukrainian politicians to indicate publicly that his country may have to give up territory, albeit temporarily. The Kyiv mayor and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky are political opponents. The mayor has repeatedly accused the president and his team of trying to undermine his authority. Speaking to British media from his office in central Kyiv on Thursday, Klitschko noted that he was "responsible for the capital of Ukraine", describing it as "the heart" of the war-torn country. He said Zelensky might be forced to take a "painful solution" to achieve peace.

Russian general  
killed by car bomb

MOSCOW: The Investigative Committee on Friday said that an explosive device ripped through a parked car near Moscow and killed a senior Russian general, adding it had launched a murder probe. Authorities named General-Lieutenant Yaroslav Moskalik, deputy head of the main operational directorate of the military's General Staff, as the victim. Investigators said they had opened a probe into murder and smuggling explosives after the Volkswagen Golf blew up outside a block of flats in the town of Balashikha, east of Moscow. Images from the scene posted on social media showed a blaze that gutted a car. The Agentstvo investigative news site, citing leaked information, said Moskalik lived in Balashikha, but the Volkswagen was not registered to him. Security camera footage posted by the Izvestia newspaper showed a massive explosion, sending fragments flying into the air. The blast happens just as someone can be seen walking towards the car. The "blast was caused by the triggering of an improvised explosive device" packed with metal fragments designed to cause maximum harm, investigators said. According to the Kremlin website, Moskalik was a Russian military representative at a "Normandy format" talks on Ukraine in 2015, amid the conflict between Kyiv and Russian-backed separatists. — Agencies

ISSI, CLAS forge strategic  
partnership to boost coop

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Centre for Law and Security (CLAS) in a formal ceremony held at The Millennium Universal College (TMUC), Islamabad. The partnership between ISSI and CLAS aims to strengthen collaborative research, policy dialogue, and academic exchange between the two institutions. From ISSI, the ceremony was attended by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Mr. Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC); and ISSI researchers. Representing CLAS were Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan, President TMUC and CLAS; Dr. Faisal Mushtaq (TI), CEO & Founder TMUC and CLAS; Mr. Rehman Azhar, Executive Director CLAS; members of the CLAS research team; and faculty and students at TMUC. The MoU was formally signed by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan, marking a significant step toward building deeper academic and research linkages. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood noted that the signing ceremony was made even more meaningful by the participation of NextGen leaders and students. Highlighting the important role of educational partnerships, Ambassador Sohail remarked that there has always been an opportunity for engagement between academia and the policy community—and ISSI is committed to bridging that gap. He emphasized that this is pursued through multiple formal and informal tracks and mediums, and stated, "We aim to make this MoU a living document through practical cooperation." He provided a brief overview of ISSI and its specialized centres and proposed avenues for collaboration, including joint research, co-hosted seminars and conferences. He also extended an invitation to TMUC students to apply for internships at ISSI, aligning with ISSI's mission of youth-inclusive dialogue. Additionally, he welcomed TMUC faculty to contribute their research to ISSI's academic journal. Concluding his remarks, he conveyed his best wishes to the students and researchers, and encouraged them to believe in the power of positive thinking. Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan, in his remarks, lauded the initiative and underscored the critical role of educational and research institutions in promoting informed understanding of pressing issues. He noted that this collaboration is a vital step forward in nurturing future leaders who are equipped to confront emerging challenges through joint research, policy advocacy, and educational exchange. — DNA



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