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Putin announces three-day ceasefire

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Naqvi praises KPK police for thwarting attack

Detailed News On Page-08



‘Backed by Indian masters’ 17 more terrorists killed at Pakistan, Afghanistan border

The number of Khawarij eliminated during the three-day anti-infiltration operation has risen to 71

STAFF REPORT / DNA

RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed 17 more terrorists during a sanitisation operation conducted near the Hassan Khel area of North Waziristan, along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Monday. According to the ISPR statement, the latest operation took place overnight between April 27 and 28, following successful engagements where security forces had killed 54 militants during operations from April 25 to 27. The military's media wing stated that the neutralised terrorists were operating at the behest of "Indian masters" and were actively plotting attacks inside Pakistan. The number of Khawarij eliminated during the three-day anti-infiltration operation has risen to 71, the statement added. Security forces also recovered a cache of weapons, ammunition, and explosives during the operation. The ISPR reaffirmed that the military remains determined to secure the country's borders and counter all efforts aimed at destabilising Pakistan. Previously, on Sunday, security forces thwarted an infiltration attempt by militants near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The militants' movements were detected during the nights of April 25-26 and 26-27, leading to a prolonged armed engagement. Intelligence reports suggested that the group intended to carry out significant attacks within Pakistan, allegedly under instructions from external actors. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif praised the security forces for their successful operation, describing it as a strong testament to Pakistan's progress in the war against terrorism. In an official statement, the PM commended the troops for their "remarkable professionalism and timely action," highlighting their success in repelling an infiltration attempt by Fitna al Khwarij terrorists from across the Afghan border in the Hassan Khel area of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. "The entire nation stands firmly with our security forces in

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China urges Pakistan, India to exercise restraint

The nuclear-armed nations have unleashed a raft of measures against each other

FOREIGN DESK

ISLAMABAD: China on Monday urged Pakistan and India to exercise restraint and welcomed all measures that will help cool down the situation. After the April 22 attack that killed 26 people, India has identified two of the three suspected militants as Pakistani, although Islamabad has denied any role and called for a neutral probe. India said on Monday it had responded to 'unprovoked' small arms firing from Pakistan along the de facto border for the fourth consecutive night, as it deepens its search for militants in the region following last week's deadly attack on tourists in Kashmir. Security officials and survivors have said the militants segregated the men at the site, a meadow in the Pahalgam area, asked their names and targeted Hindus before shooting them at close range. The nuclear-armed nations have unleashed a raft of measures against each other, with India putting the critical Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance and Pakistan closing its airspace to Indian airlines.

On Indian threats

PTI senators urge govt to convene APC

“We are united when it comes to defending Pakistan,” says Senator Shibli Faraz

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: In a clear message of unity on national issues, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the main opposition party, on Monday urged the federal government to convene an All Parties Conference (APC) to respond to recent threats from the Narendra Modi-led Indian government in the wake of Pahalgam attack. Addressing the Senate session today, PTI Senator Barrister Syed Ali Zafar said: "People know the script of Modi's drama very well." He said that the Indian government could not suspend the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) unilaterally. Terming the Indian allegations on Pakistan in connection with the Pahalgam attack, wherein 26 people were killed, "baseless", the PTI leader said that PM Modi was leading India towards destruction. The April 22 attack claimed the lives of 26 people – including one Nepali national – and India's government blames Pakistan for the attack, a claim that Islamabad vehemently denied and also termed as a "false flag operation". "If the Modi-led government diverts even a drop of Pakistan's water, it will be considered as an enemy attack,"

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Bench reconstituted for hearing Imran Khan's bail petitions

The original bench, which comprised Justice Syed Shahbaz Ali Rizvi and Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh, has been dissolved following a routine reshuffling of judicial rosters

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court has dissolved the two-member bench previously hearing the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder's bail petitions related to the events of May 9, officials confirmed on Monday. The original bench, which comprised Justice Syed Shahbaz Ali Rizvi and Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh, has been dissolved following a routine reshuffling of judicial rosters. A new two-member bench, still headed by Justice Syed Shahbaz Ali Rizvi, has been formed.

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Aid for Gaza dispatched by AKF reaches Jordan

Speaking to the media, Dr. Hafeez Ur Rehman said that the aid was sent with the cooperation of the Government of Pakistan and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

NEWS DESK

AMMA: The Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan has dispatched a 40-ton consignment of humanitarian aid for the war-affected people of Gaza, which has now arrived in Amman, the capital of Jordan. According to Dr. Hafeez-ur-Rehman, president of Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan, the relief shipment, sent from Karachi on behalf of the Pakistani people, includes 20 tons of medicines, 5 tons of hygiene kits, and 15 tons of tents. Speaking to the media, Dr. Hafeez Ur Rehman said that the aid was sent with the cooperation of the Government of Pakistan and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). He further said that earlier, during the month of Ramadan, the foundation had planned to dispatch 900 tons of relief goods via air cargo for the besieged and affected residents of Gaza. However, due

to the closure of border crossings with Egypt and Jordan, the delivery could not be made during that period. Dr. Hafeez Ur Rehman noted that the successful dispatch of this aid was made possible through continuous diplomatic and administrative efforts by the Government of Pakistan, Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan, and Jordan's Royal Medical Services. Preparations for the shipment of an additional 900 tons of relief goods currently stored in Alkhidmat's warehouses in Lahore and Karachi have been completed. In the coming days, medicines, tents, tarpaulins, sleeping bags, and tinned food will be sent in phases aboard six to seven cargo planes, via Jordan and Egypt, to Gaza. Previously, with the support of the Government of Pakistan, the National Disaster Management Authority, the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation, and the Royal Medical Services of Jordan, the Alkhidmat Foundation had sent 3,800 tons of relief goods valued at Rs6 billion to Gaza through 19 aircraft and four sea vessels.

68 killed in US strikes on Yemen

The civil defence has announced that 68 African migrants were killed and 47 others wounded in the US attack

AGENCIES

SANA'A: Houthi media outlets in Yemen on Monday said that US strikes hit a migrant detention centre in the movement's stronghold of Saada, killing at least 68 people. The United States military has hammered the Houthis with near-daily strikes since March 15 in an operation dubbed "Rough Rider", seeking to end the threat they pose to vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The Houthis launched strikes targeting Israel and Western vessels in the Red Sea, in what they describe as solidarity with the Palestinians, since Hamas conducted an unprecedented attack on Israel in October 2023.

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Pakistan YouTube channels blocked by Indian govt

The move has sparked renewed debate around freedom of expression in India

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: India has blocked more than a dozen Pakistani YouTube channels, following their coverage of the Pahalgam incident. The channels were reporting on the Pahalgam attack and had exposed discrepancies in the Modi government's narrative regarding the events, prompting

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Speeding modernization

PM Shehbaz announces plans to expand digital wallets across Pakistan

The prime minister said that 79 percent of the programme's finances were distributed digitally, and money transfers were made effectively and transparently using digital wallets

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Monday announced expanding the scope of digital wallets across the country and said that the provinces would be integrated into the digital payment system through a coordinated framework. Addressing a ceremony to acknowledge individuals who showed outstanding performance in the success of the Prime Minister's Ramazan Relief Package, PM Shehbaz said modern payment methods enabled smooth transfer of funds and these payments were made transparently while maintaining the dignity of deserving individuals. The prime minister said that 79 percent of the programme's finances were distributed digitally, and money transfers were made effectively and transparently using digital wallets. According to a press release from the PM Office Media Wing,

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Relevant provisions in Army Act exists since 1967: AGP

The Attorney General further mentioned that previously the Sindh Canal issue was under discussion, but now all attention has shifted to India's recent actions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan has argued before the seven-member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan that relevant provisions in the Military Act have existed

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Briefs

40 injured in Noshki explosion

“The fire was so intense it engulfed the fire brigade vehicle present at the scene

DNA


QUETTA: At least 40 people were injured when an oil tanker exploded after catching fire in Balochistan's Noshki district on Monday, officials said. "The oil tanker was parked at a truck depot when it caught fire, injuring at least 40 people," Noshki Deputy Commissioner (DC) Amjad Soomro told media, adding that the fire was caused by welding work on the tanker. "The fire brigade was trying to control the fire when the truck exploded," DC Soomro said, adding that fire brigade personnel were seriously injured as a result. He said that four police personnel present at the scene to move citizens away were also injured, while those near the oil tanker suffered 70 to 80 per cent burns.

Khawaja Asif issues clarification

I did not say war would break out in two to three days






DNA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif clarified his recent remarks regarding war with India, stating that his words were misconstrued and taken out of context. In a statement issued here, Khawaja Asif said that during an interview with an international media outlet he was asked about the situation. "I responded by saying that the next two to three days are crucial in the current situation. I did not say war would break out in two to three days, but I did say that the situation is critical and the threat of war is real," Khawaja Asif said.



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KP govt failed to deliver on all fronts: Kundi

He said the education sector was also suffering, noting that several universities in the province were being run without vice-chancellors, depriving the youth of quality education. Kundi alleged the provincial government of auctioning jobs and postings. He also stressed that university pensioners were on the streets due to the government's poor management.

DERA ISMAIL KHAN:Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government-led by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has failed on all fronts to fulfill its promises made to people and address critical issues plaguing the province. Speaking to the media, during his visit to Kundi Model Farm, he expressed concerns over worsening governance, corruption, and a range of grievances affecting people in the province. Kundi pointed out that the provincial government had failed to meet the expectations of the people, in all departments, leading to administrative inefficiency. The Governor highlighted ongoing challenges such as deteriorating law and order, frequent terror attacks, poor road infrastructure and lack of basic healthcare facilities in hospitals. He said the education sector was also suffering, noting that several universities in the province were being run without vice-chancellors, depriving the youth of quality education. Kundi alleged the provincial government of auctioning jobs and postings. He also stressed that university pensioners were on the streets due to the government's poor management. He called on the KP government to

take pragmatic measures to address these pressing issues and work for the socio-economic development of the province. The Governor also addressed national security concerns, particularly following the recent blasts in South Waziristan. He reiterated that Afghanistan's territory was being used to orchestrate terrorism against Pakistan, asserting that 70 to 80 percent of terrorism originates from across the border. Replying to a question regarding recent tension between Pakistan and India, he accused India of attempting to cover up its internal failures by blaming Pakistan for terrorism. He added that if India sought war, Pakistan was ready to retaliate but if negotiations were desired, Pakistan was also prepared for dialogue. Kundi emphasized that the country's nuclear and missile technology is meant for national defense and should not be perceived as a display of power. "India should not forget that our armed forces are fully capable of defending Pakistan and responding effectively to any aggression," he said. Referring to development initiatives for Dera's region, Governor Kundi expressed his commitment to advancing projects in Dera Ismail Khan, including the establishment of an interna-

tional airport in the region. Despite obstacles from the provincial government, he vowed to continue pushing for the development of the area to benefit its residents. Highlighting the legacy of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), he recalled that founder chairman of the party Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had gifted the Chashma Right Bank Canal (CRBC) project to the region, while Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has now launched the major Chashma Lift Canal project. He confirmed that tenders for the first phase out of six phases of the project have been issued, and its inauguration will take place soon. "After completion of this project, Daman area and Dera region will be fertilized and self-sufficient in wheat production, enabling us to supply wheat to other provinces," he added. The Governor further stated that the Chashma Lift Canal project would spur economic growth, leading to the establishment of more sugar mills in the region, providing employment opportunities and boosting local prosperity. Kundi also announced that the PPP was actively working to regain political influence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and aimed to form the government in the upcoming general elections.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Newly elected members of the PIMS retired employees welfare association pose for a group picture, at a local hotel. — DNA

KP to declare more Tourism Zones under ADP 2025-26

PESHAWAR: Advisor to KP CM on Tourism, Culture, Archaeology, and Museums, Zahid Chanzab has said that in order to effectively harness the province's tourism potential, it is imperative to grant legal status and to declare new tourist zones under the Annual Development Program 2025-26. He emphasized that there are numerous locations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with tremendous potential for tourism development, which urgently need to be officially declared as tourist zones. "He expressed these views during a special meeting at his office in Peshawar with the Secretary of the Department of Tourism and Culture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan, and the newly appointed Director General of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), Habibullah Arif on Monday. Advisor Zahid Chanzab congratulated the new Director General on assuming office and expressed hope that his leadership skills would play a pivotal role in resolving the longstanding and complex issues faced by the Authority. On this occasion, the Secretary of Tourism and Culture, Dr. Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan, informed that all necessary documentation for granting legal status to new tourist sites has been completed, and these measures will be included in the upcoming Annual Development Program. —APP

Punjab CM orders prioritizing public-centric road projects

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed authorities concerned to prioritize road development projects based on public needs and usage patterns. Chairing a meeting of the Communication and Works (C&W) Department, here on Monday, she emphasized the importance of implementing by-laws to ensure that roadsides remain free from encroachments. The CM announced that under the Biggest-Ever Road Rehabilitation Program in Punjab's history, 12,000 kilometers of roads have been constructed and rehabilitated to significantly enhance connectivity and ease of communication across the province. During the meeting, the chief minister reviewed the 18.5-kilometre Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop project and instructed

the departments concerned to submit a feasibility report for a proposed expressway connecting Layyah and Bhakkar Road to the motorway. She also discussed the Kharian-Rawalpindi Express Road project and directed the installation of uniform-style tuft tiles in cities and villages to enhance urban aesthetics. The Secretary C&W Department provided a detailed briefing on the ongoing road projects across all divisions and districts of Punjab. He informed the Chief Minister that the construction, expansion, and rehabilitation of 460 roads are progressing at a rapid pace. The Secretary added that the construction of the road from Quaid-e-Azam Interchange to Wagah Border has been completed, with ancillary works such as drainage and wall construc-

tion currently underway. Further updates included the approval of the Multan-Vehari dual carriageway project by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (EC-NEC), with construction of an additional carriageway in progress. The CM was also informed that all road construction and rehabilitation projects in Murree, as well as the Shakargarh Road under the Kartarpur Corridor Project, have been completed. Meanwhile, work on the Muridke-Narowal Road is actively underway. CM Maryam Nawaz endorsed proposals to maintain a general road width of 12 feet and approved plans to construct and rehabilitate inter-district and inter-village roads in the upcoming financial year.—APP

Captain Talha passes out from PMA



ABBOTTABAD: In a proud moment for his family, Captain Talha Abid has successfully passed out from the 70th Integrated Course at the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Abbottabad. Captain Talha Abid is the son of Subedar (Retd) Abid Hussain, grandson of Haji Nazir Hussain Late and nephew of Muhammad Waqas. The young officer's achievement is a testament to his hard work, dedication, and passion for serving his country. The passing out parade marked a significant milestone in Captain Talha's journey, as he embarked on his career as a commissioned officer in the Pakistan Army. His family and friends extended heartfelt congratulations to him on this remarkable achievement. "We wish Captain Talha Abid all the best in his future endeavors and pray for his continued success," said his family. "May he serve the nation with honor and distinction." Captain Talha Abid's commissioning is a source of pride not only for his family but also for the entire nation, and he is expected to make valuable contributions to the country's defense and security.—DNA

Progress on key development initiatives reviewed

PESHAWAR:Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah on Monday chaired a weekly review meeting to assess the progress of tasks assigned to various departments, with a particular focus on high-impact development projects and governance reforms. The meeting provided a comprehensive update on the status of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects. It was informed that preparations are underway to organize a roadshow this week to promote the Thandiani Tourism Project. Updates were also shared regarding the Ghanool Integrated Tourism Zone project, Swat Motorway Phase-II, Peshawar-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway, and Daraban Economic Zone initiatives. The Chief Secretary underscored the importance of ensuring full financial allocations for projects nearing completion. He directed the

concerned departments to prioritize funding for high-impact projects to ensure their timely completion and to maximize public benefit. He further emphasized the critical role of the project tracking sheet and instructed the Planning and Development Department to maintain its regular updates to facilitate informed decision-making. The meeting also discussed digital governance initiatives. A trial exercise for the e-office system is planned for this week, introducing functionalities such as e-summary processing, cabinet approvals, and diary and dispatch modules. These measures aim to enhance transparency, efficiency, and service delivery. Progress on the province's e-procurement portal, E-PADS, was also reviewed. It was reported that 175 tenders have been uploaded so far, and the technical bid opening process

for the Northern Section of the Ring Road Missing Link Peshawar project has been successfully completed. Addressing urban management issues, particularly traffic congestion in Peshawar, the Chief Secretary directed the Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) to submit a comprehensive beautification plan for the provincial capital by June 30. The plan will encompass all key aspects of urban aesthetics and civic improvement. It was noted that work has already commenced on developing a model sector in Hayatabad, Peshawar. Highlighting the government's commitment to good governance, Shahab Ali Shah said these initiatives form part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's roadmap for transparency, efficiency, and improved service delivery, expressing confidence that their sustained implementation will significantly benefit the public. —APP

Rally held against Indian allegations, decision regarding IWT

KARACHI:Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU) organized a rally in the favour of Pakistan and against Indian allegations and its decision to cancel the Indus Waters Treaty, here on Monday. Vice Chancellor of SMIU Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai led the rally, which was commenced from the Main Building of the university and culminated near I.T. Tower of the university. Following the rally, Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai addressed the participants of the rally at Talpur House, where he strongly condemned the Indian false allegation against Pakistan and said that India has no proof of such false allegations, that is why India has been isolated in the world. He further said India itself carrying out state terrorism in occupied Kashmir and killing innocent Kashmiris daily. The Vice Chancellor said Pakistan is itself facing terrorism in its two provinces: Balochistan and KPK, hence our country is itself victim of terrorism, but now the world knows hypocrisy of India and we demand that the international community must condemn India on its hostility with Pakistan and cancellation of Indus Waters Treaty. Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai said the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has rightly said that an independent inquiry must be conducted by an independent international team.—APP

Committee for transparency in Sehat card initiative

PESHAWAR: The Standing Committee on Finance of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly on Monday emphasized that the Sehat Insaf Card was a public welfare initiative, and ensuring its transparency and effective implementation should be a top priority. The chairman of the committee MPA Arab Muhammad Usman Khan affirmed that the committee would thoroughly scrutinize all financial matters to ensure

the proper and transparent use of public funds. The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister for Law Aftab Alam and Members of the Provincial Assembly Taj Muhammad, Ashfaq Ahmed, Sharafat Ali, and Muhammad Nisar also attended the session. During the meeting, representatives from the Health Department gave a detailed briefing on the financial and administrative matters of the Sehat Insaf Card program. The committee was

informed that complete records of financial disbursements, expenditures, and funds provided to hospitals under the program were available. The meeting emphasized further improving the transparency of the Sehat Insaf Card and ensuring the timely provision of medical facilities to beneficiaries. The committee directed that, in the next meeting, district-wise financial records related to the Sehat Insaf Card must be provided.—APP

Early cotton sowing target met in Khanewal

KHANEWAR: Agriculture officials informed the district agriculture advisory committee on Monday that the target for sowing of early varieties of cotton has been achieved 100 per cent while that of seasonal cotton was 60 per cent complete and still ongoing in Khanewal district Deputy Director Agriculture Mahar Muhammad Iqbal informed the meeting, chaired by ADCG Ghulam Mustafa Sehar, that early cotton varieties cover 105,000 acre area in Khanewal while the target of 199,000 acre for seasonal cotton sowing has been achieved 60 per cent and sowing was still in progress.—APP

Rawalpindi: On the way of development



MUHAMMAD IMRAN HAIDER

Development projects are not only a reflection of the government's performance but also play a key role in providing facilities to the people. Development projects help in improving the living standard along with public welfare. Development is a sign of human evolution. Completion of development projects plays a constructive role in the overall development of the nation. Developing countries need timely completion of development projects along with excellent planning to move forward with the developed world. The scope of comprehensive planning revolves around feasibility report of projects, financial assistance, mapping, priorities, dealing with challenges, quality, human resources and timely completion.

After assuming the office of Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif has put Punjab on the path of

development in accordance with the requirements of the modern era in 14 months with excellent planning. CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched various comprehensive projects for the development of every city of Punjab. Rawalpindi is an important city of Punjab. Rawalpindi city, spread along with the capital Islamabad, has the status of a twin city. On the instructions of CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, work is underway on various development projects in Rawalpindi. Be it improving travel facilities or making the environment clean, clean water project or taking steps to beautify the city, promoting tourism or eliminating encroachments, the journey of development is underway on the directions of the CM Punjab. Currently, construction work is underway on 56 development projects in Rawalpindi division.

CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif recently paid a detailed visit to Rawalpindi. The purpose of the visit was to review the pace and quality of development works. She visited development projects. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed happiness over the expected completion of the biggest project in the history of Rawalpindi by May 31 and congratulated the administration. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif paid a detailed visit to the Rawalpindi GPO Underpass and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Flyover Project. She also reviewed the construction

quality of the project and inspected the ongoing construction activities. Chief Minister responded to the enthusiasm of the workers working on the project by waving her hand. She directed to ensure the construction quality of the project at all costs and ordered to plant trees on the sides of the roads. Two more underpasses will be built to make Rawalpindi's Mall Road signal-free. Two lakh vehicles will be able to pass through the underpasses easily every day. The construction of the underpasses will make it easier for AFIC and MH patients to cross the road. In total, the Mall Road will be made signal-free for 26 kilometers. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Flyover will be completed at a cost of Rs 2.3 billion and underpass project at a cost of Rs 4.38 billion. The construction work of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Flyover has been completed by 85 percent and the construction of the underpass by 60 percent. The CM Punjab was given a detailed briefing by the Secretary C&W about the ongoing project. It was informed in the briefing that the installation of piles of the overhead bridge of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Flyover has been completed. 56 girders of the flyover have been prepared, 32 girders have been installed on the flyover. The construction work of 7 drains of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Flyover is in full swing and the boundary wall of the flyover has also been completed. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sha-

rif also reviewed the construction activities of the underpass at Mall Road GPO Chowk. The construction of 2093 piles and girders of the underpass has been completed. A special path for pedestrians has also been included in the project. The completion of the Nawaz Sharif Flyover will enable citizens to have direct access to the motorway and Rawalpindi Ring Road. 79,000 vehicles will get benefit from the completion of the Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Flyover. The Rawalpindi Ring Road project will be completed by December this year. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is keenly interested in the completion of the project. After assuming power, she visited the Rawalpindi Ring Road last year and early this year. She also conducted an aerial survey of the Rawalpindi Ring Road project. The completion of the 38-kilometer-long Rawalpindi Ring Road project will solve the long-standing problem of traffic. The completion of the Rawalpindi Ring Road will also increase economic and business activities. The completion of the Rawalpindi Ring Road will provide ease of travel to millions of citizens. Similarly, work is underway on the feasibility study of Naula Lei, construction and repair of Al-Hannan Masjid Road and marking of biker lanes from Ammar Chowk to Kachhari Chowk. On the instructions of the Chief Min-

ister, encroachments have been eliminated throughout the city, which has also received public appreciation. On the instructions of CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, it has been decided to run Pakistan's first fast 'bullet train' from Lahore to Rawalpindi. A working committee has been formed in this regard. In the light of the vision of Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif, practical steps are being taken to promote tourism in Rawalpindi Division like in the rest of Punjab. Work is also underway on the proposed master plan to preserve and expand the cultural heritage and archeology of Taxila. Expansion of Taxila Museum, construction of Bhair Open Air Museum, restoration of Mankayala Stupa, Bhalar Stupa, Dharma Rajika, Mohra Murad Complex, measures to preserve the historical remains of Sirkap city, Kanala and Kalawan are part of the proposed master plan. Gandhara Tourist Trail, construction of the entrance gate, roads and remodeling of Gandhara Art Village are also included in the proposed master plan. On the other hand, work is underway to make Murree Road green and beautiful. Work is also underway to restore the ancient tourist sites of Murree. Work on the feasibility report of the tourist glass train project from Islamabad to Murree to promote tourism is in the final stages. Tourism promotion will not only provide entertainment and facilities to

tourists but will also help in improving the economy. Under the Apni Chhat Apna Ghar scheme, loans have been provided to 864 people in Rawalpindi district and 3678 people across the division. Dream Water Project will be completed in 2027. Work is being done on other water supply projects including Dhaducha Dam. 105 water filtration plants have been installed across the division this year. Under the Clean Punjab vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a new system of cleanliness under the Suthra Punjab program has been introduced in Rawalpindi division, under which the scope of cleanliness has been expanded from urban areas to rural areas. The Clean Punjab campaign will no longer be limited to cities. Villages have also been included in this program. New vehicles have also been provided for garbage disposal under the Suthra Punjab program. This program, launched by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, will play a key role in promoting a clean environment. There is no doubt that the completion of development projects will provide facilities to the citizens of Rawalpindi. Public welfare projects are among the priorities of the Punjab Chief Minister. These priorities can be judged from the fact that the Punjab Chief Minister, herself, is monitoring the projects.

National Days and Armed Forces Days

APRIL

April 04/Senegal National Day

April 07/W. H. O. World Health Day

April 12/Somalia Armed Forces Day

April 15/DPR Korea The Day of the Sun

April 16/Denmark National Day

April 17/Iran Army Day

April 17/Syria Independence Day

April 18/Zimbabwe Independence Day

April 24/Holy See Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate

April 25/DPR Korea Armed Forces Day

April 26/Tanzania National Day

April 27/Sierra Leone Independence Day

April 27/South Africa Freedom Day

April 30/Sweden Birthday of His Majesty

April 30/Netherlands Birthday of Queen



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency	
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Islamabad.....	0321-5744480

Call for stronger Shariah governance to boost Islamic finance sector

The session also paid tribute to the late Prof. Khurshid Ahmad, a distinguished scholar, reformer, and statesman, for his lifelong contributions to Islamic economics and finance and included his reflections on the Islamic banking experience

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Urgent dedicated primary legislation, swift adoption of AAOIFI (Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions) standards tailored to local financial context, and the establishment of a stronger Shariah governance framework are critical steps needed to ensure the sustainable and credible growth of Islamic banks and non-bank financial institutions in Pakistan. This requires coordinated efforts across the regulatory, legal, and institutional fronts, as no financial framework operates in isolation. Leading financial and legal experts highlighted this at a session 'Towards a Shariah-Based Islamic Finance Ecosystem in Pakistan' held to discuss the legal framework for Islamic banks and non-bank financial institutions at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The discussion witnessed broad participation from the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Islamic banks, academia, and legal professionals. The main speakers included Justice Dr Syed Muhammad Anwer, aalim judge of the Federal Shariat Court, Tariq Naseem, head of Islamic Finance Department at SECP, Tauseef ur Rahman, managing



executive, SECP, and Dr Muhammad Ayub, former director, Research and Training, Riphah Center of Islamic Business. It was moderated by Dr Atiquzzafar Khan, board member, IPS. In a key presentation, Tariq Naseem elaborated on a proposed legal framework for non-bank financial institutions, noting that the sector's growth remains stunted by the absence of a comprehensive and dedicated structure. Dr Ayub provided a comparative analysis

of the Shariah governance frameworks issued by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). He highlighted how legal and regulatory gaps in Shariah governance have allowed compromises in Islamic banks' operations, pointing to the urgent need for systemic overhaul. Justice Dr Syed Anwer underscored the need for a well-crafted legal framework that ensures both regulatory clarity and adherence to Shariah principles in the Islamic financial sector.

Building on these presentations, the speakers accentuated the distinction between Shariah-compliant and Shariah-based finance with a suggestion to move beyond surface-level compliance toward a truly ethical, holistic financial system grounded in Islamic principles. They also highlighted Pakistan's untapped potential as a regional hub for Islamic finance, which is projected to grow to nearly \$7 trillion globally by 2027. The participants pointed out that

as AAOIFI's standards are developed through extensive consultation, these can be adopted by SBP and SECP, with necessary modifications to align with Pakistan's capital and money markets. They also stressed the need for primary laws to regulate Islamic banks and non-bank financial institutions, as current regulations are largely based on secondary legislation. The participants emphasized that the SBP and SECP should establish rigorous criteria and a selection mechanism for Shariah scholars with expertise in Islamic law and finance to strengthen the governance and legal framework for both banks and non-bank financial institutions. To ensure impartiality, the scholars should serve only one institution at a time, with appointments managed through a central pool. Besides, each fatwa or Shariah board decision should be clearly referenced to the sources of the Qur'an, Sunnah, or ijma. Additionally, the Federal Shariat Court could act as the adjudicator in cases involving conflicting Shariah opinions between institutions. The session also paid tribute to the late Prof. Khurshid Ahmad, a distinguished scholar, reformer, and statesman, for his lifelong contributions to Islamic economics and finance and included his reflections on the Islamic banking experience.

Pak-China Summit stressed shift to green economy

Tony Dong, in his keynote address, highlighted three transformative areas of opportunity: the synergy between China's advancements in photovoltaic materials and Pakistan's smart grid technology

ISLAMABAD: Participants of the "1st Pakistan-China Green and Low-Carbon Summit 2025" emphasized the urgent need for global collaboration to accelerate the transition toward a green economy, highlighting innovation, sustainable development, and joint partnerships as critical drivers of change. The summit, jointly organized by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (OIC-COMSTEC) and the Sino-International Entrepreneurs Federation (SIEF), was held at the OIC-COMSTEC Secretariat in Islamabad on Monday. Under the theme "Green Economy Leadership: Catalyzing Innovation for Sustainable Development," the event brought together policymakers, scientists, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and diplomats from various OIC member countries, aiming to promote sustainable development and foster stronger green innovation partnerships. A significant milestone of the event was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between COMSTEC and SIEF, along with the inauguration of the COMSTEC-SIEF Coordination Office for Green Technologies. This new office will act as a hub for knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and joint green innovation initiatives between the Islamic world and China. In his opening address, Coordinator General of COMSTEC, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, emphasized that transitioning to a green economy is not merely an alternative but humanity's only sustainable path forward. He underlined that green growth represents a collective commitment to development that secures the needs of future generations. Dr. Choudhary called for enhanced collaboration between OIC countries and China, particularly in areas such as climate change mitigation, food security, water resource management, health innovation, and the development of green energy technologies. He further highlighted the innovation potential within OIC member states, which, when combined with China's robust manufacturing sector, could yield transformative results. Senior Advisor to COMSTEC and Chairman and CEO of the Interactive Group of Companies, Engr. Dr. Shahid Mahmud, delivered an impassioned speech, stressing that the green economy is not optional but essential for humanity's survival. He identified energy, food, water, healthcare, and security as key sectors for collaboration between China and OIC countries. Chief Representative of SIEF, Mr. Tony Dong, in his keynote address, highlighted three transformative areas of opportunity: the synergy between China's advancements in photovoltaic materials and Pakistan's smart grid technology; the co-creation of green building standards aligned with Islamic architectural heritage; and the empowerment of youth through cross-border climate-tech incubation programs.—DNA

Pakistan to achieve \$4b in IT exports: Shaza

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, said on Monday that Pakistan is expected to reach \$4 billion in IT exports during the current fiscal year (July 2024 to June 2025). While briefing foreign media about the upcoming Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Digital Forum, scheduled for April 29-30, she said that Pakistan's IT exports were \$3.2

billion last year and are projected to grow by 27% to hit \$4 billion this year. "We are working to speed up our efforts and aim to achieve the \$4 billion target within the current financial year," she added. She further said the Prime Minister had set an ambitious goal of reaching \$25 billion in IT exports over the next four years. The minister said the ministry is aiming for \$15 billion from direct IT export services and IT products, while

targeting an additional \$10 billion in economic impact through the government's National Digitalisation Program. Talking about the FDI Digital Forum, she shared that more than 400 delegates and 30 local and international investors are expected to participate. She also mentioned that around 10 ministers from different countries would attend the event. "This is an opportunity for the world to see Pakistan as a new hub for technology and innovation," she said. She added that the forum would include high-level meetings, policy discussions, and networking sessions to promote international cooperation in technology and digital investment. Shaza Fatima highlighted that the forum is an important step towards making Pakistan a regional center for technology. "This event is not just a gathering; it shows Pakistan's commitment to joining the global digital economy," she stated.—DNA

Kamal reaffirms Pak's commitment to health equity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reaffirmed its strong commitment to advancing health equity, achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and strengthening regional cooperation in healthcare during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Health Ministers' Forum. Addressing the forum, Federal Minister for Health Mustafa Kamal emphasized that providing access to quality healthcare for all citizens remains a top priority for Pakistan, guided by principles of equity, social justice, and solidarity. He highlighted Pakistan's ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening Primary Health Care (PHC) systems to reduce preventable morbidity and mortality. Kamal outlined the government's vision, shaped by the upcoming National Health and Population Policy (2025-2034), which seeks to address existing healthcare gaps and set strategic directions toward achieving UHC, in alignment

with the Astana Declaration of 2018. Calling for greater collaboration among SCO member states, the minister stressed the importance of eliminating health disparities to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. "Strengthening public healthcare systems and promoting high-quality development of PHC must remain at the center of our efforts," Kamal said. Highlighting the role of technology, he showcased Pakistan's achievements in digital health innovation, including the launch of the National Digital Health Framework, the expansion of telemedicine and mobile health services, and the country-wide adoption of DHIS2 for health data management. He proposed the establishment of an SCO Digital Health Knowledge Hub to promote policy harmonization, responsible use of AI in healthcare, and knowledge sharing across member states. Reflecting on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, Kamal emphasized the urgent need to build stronger health emergency response systems.

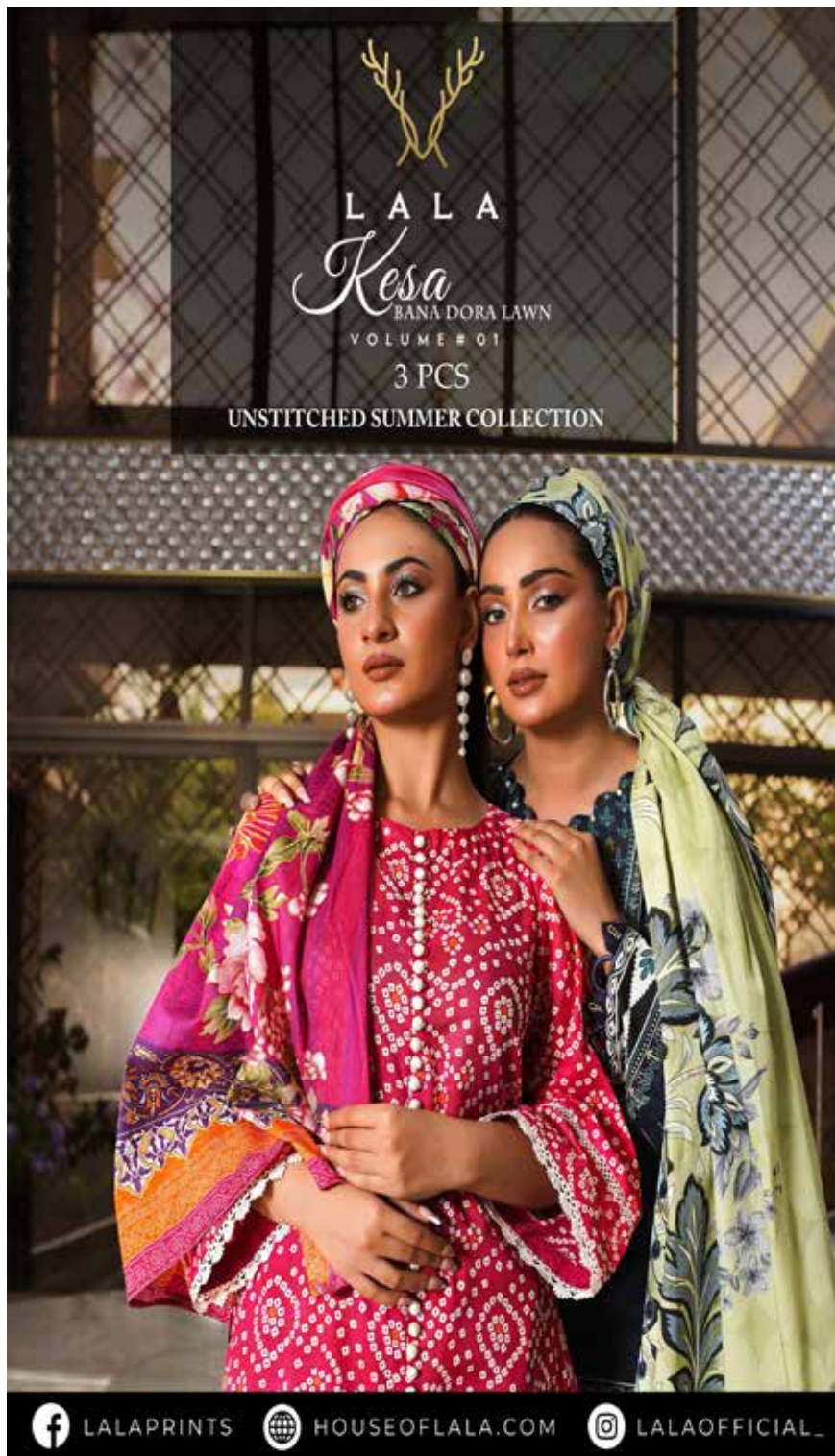
He shared details of Pakistan's National Action Plan for Health Security (2024-2028), developed following the Joint External Evaluation of 2023, and proposed regional initiatives such as a Regional Emergency Medical Cooperation Mechanism, joint training exercises, and enhanced innovation sharing. The minister also spotlighted the importance of traditional and integrative medicine, noting its deep cultural roots across SCO countries. He proposed the creation of a SCO Centre of Excellence for Traditional and Integrative Medicine, along with frameworks for regulation, quality assurance, and the integration of traditional practices into primary healthcare systems. Concluding his address, Kamal reaffirmed Pakistan's full support for the SCO's health cooperation agenda, expressing confidence that through collaboration, innovation, and a blending of traditional knowledge with modern technologies, member states can work together to build a healthier, safer, and fairer world for all.

Woman saved from self-immolation

RAWALPINDI: A woman was saved from self-immolation on Monday at the Dhoke Syedan Chowk with the help of Safe City cameras. According to a footage released by the Punjab Safe Cities Authority, the woman tried to alight after dousing petrol on her. The traffic warden present on the spot also tried to save her. A Safe City Virtual Patrolling Officer at the Safe City Rawalpindi saw her pouring petrol on her during live surveillance, and immediately dispatched the relevant police and rescue teams to the spot. The two teams reached the spot on time and took the woman into protective custody, the news release said. According to the woman, she had taken the step over domestic problems. "A precious life was saved due to the timely and coordinated action of Safe City, Race Course Police and Rescue 1122," the Punjab Safe Cities Authority said. The officials at the Rawalpindi Safe City, it added, were keeping a close watch through cameras on every suspicious activity in the city.—APP

RWMC conducts cleanliness awareness drive

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) communication teams carried out their cleanliness awareness campaign in Union Council-34 Banni on Monday. According to the RWMC spokesman, the teams asked the shopkeepers and residents of the area to play their part in educating the people about the importance of cleanliness. The teams also distributed waste bags and leaflets among the people to educate them about the proper disposal of garbage at waste containers placed in every union council of the city. Chief Executive Officer RWMC Rana Sajid Safdar informed that under the Zero Waste Operations being conducted across the division, special measures were taken in all union councils, markets, hospitals, educational institutions, mosques, and parks. Along with cleanliness, public awareness was being prioritised to ensure the sustainability of the campaign. In case of any complaint, citizens were asked to register their complaints on helpline number 1139, which would be rectified immediately, he added.



Briefs

**ANF arrests
7 smugglers
over 45 kg of
drugs worth
Rs 11.5m**

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting four operations across the country, recovered as many as 45.945 kilograms(kg) of drugs worth more than Rs 11.5 million and arrested seven suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Monday. He informed that 20 kg of Ice were recovered from a resident of Peshawar near IJP Road, Islamabad, tactfully hidden in the secret parts of a motorcycle. In another operation, 24 kg of hashish were recovered from three suspects, including two women, residents of Karachi and from another person resident of Swabi near Thallian Interchange, Islamabad. As much as 1 kg and 800 grams of hashish were recovered from a suspect resident of Chitral, at Qalandarabad, Abbotabad. During a joint operation by the Airport Security Force and the ANF at the Multan International Airport entrance gate, as many as 156 grams of narcotic pills were recovered from the accused resident of Dera Ghazi Khan. Cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Narcotics Control Act, and an investigation has been initiated.—APP

**Gilani
arrives in
Morocco**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani has arrived in Morocco to attend the 3rd Edition of the South-South Parliamentary Dialogue Forum. He was accompanied by a delegation of senators, including Senator Dost Ali Jessar from PPP, Senator Saadia Abbasi from PML-N, and Senator Khalida Ateeb from MQM, said a news release received here on Monday. Upon arrival at Casablanca airport, the Chairman and his delegation were warmly received by Muhammad Salim bin Masood, Quaestor of the Parliament House of Councillors, and Jawwad Al Hilali, Vice President of the House of Councillors. They were also joined by Madam Rabia Kasuri, Charge d'Affairs, who welcomed Chairman Gillani and his delegation, marking the beginning of a significant parliamentary engagement. The chairman Senate will deliver a speech at the forum, which will be attended by speakers and presidents from 31 countries.—APP

**Venture Capitals
remain optimistic
as country's
digital economy
develops**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan's digital economy steadily gains traction, the South Asian country is attracting increasing interest from regional venture capital firms seeking untapped growth opportunities beyond traditional investment hubs. With a population of over 240 million—one of the largest in the world—Pakistan presents a sizable consumer base and a young, tech-savvy demographic. Nearly two-thirds of the population is under the age of 30, a statistic often cited by investors as a key indicator of digital potential. "Pakistan is one of the most promising but underappreciated digital markets in Asia," said Thomas G. Tsao, Co-Founder and Chairperson of Gobi Partners, during an exclusive interview with China Economic Net. Tsao noted that Pakistan reminded him of China back in 2002, where a vast population and a surge in internet users laid the groundwork for rapid digital scaling. "When we first entered Pakistan in 2018, the ecosystem was at a very early stage. But what we saw was a country full of energy, talent, and ambition," he highlighted the country's young talent and growing connectivity as core reasons for Gobi's early move into the market. Since then, Gobi has become one of several regional players participating in Pakistan's evolving startup ecosystem, launching landmark projects like the USD 30 million Techxila Fund I and Techxila Fund II (USD 50 million), investing in several Pakistani startups across sectors.—APP

'A Moment in Time' Masterpieces of trio go on display at NAG

he co-curated the exhibition "Humanism: Flowering of the Being" at Asia House Gallery in London, featuring works by Pakistani and British-Pakistani artists, with proceeds supporting various charities. Moreover, she co-curated "Challenging Oeuvres" at the Alhambra Arts Centre in Lahore, presenting works by differently-abled artists from the Differently Abled Artists Consortium (DAAC), highlighting inclusivity in the arts.

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD : In a rare confluence of artistic brilliance, three of Pakistan's most celebrated creative minds — Jimmy Engineer, Rahat Naveed Masud, and Amna Patudi — come together to present "A Moment in Time". This extraordinary exhibition kicked off at the National Art Gallery, organized by For Art Sake and Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Monday, and will remain open till May 12, between 10 am to 4pm on working days. The exhibition is not just a showcase of individual mastery, but a symphonic blend of vision, spirit, and storytelling. Each canvas breathes life into forgotten memories, quiet reflections, and the timeless dance of culture and identity. As their distinct styles intertwine, the trio invites art lovers to pause, to wonder, and to lose themselves in the powerful beauty of a single, unforgettable moment captured through their art. Embarking on his professional journey in 1976, Jimmy has created over 2,000 paintings, 1,000 calligraphies, and numerous prints that are part of private collections worldwide, including in China, India, Russia, the UK, and the US. His artwork spans various genres, encompassing historical events, religious themes, landscapes, and abstract compositions. Notably, his series on the Partition of India and depictions of Allama Iqbal's "Javed Nama" are acclaimed for their emotional depth and intricate detail. In recognition of his contributions, Engineer has received numerous awards, including the Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Star of Excellence) and Hilale-Imtiaz (Crescent of Excellence) from the Government of Pakistan in 2005 and 2025 respectively. Jimmy Engineer's



paintings stand out for their emotional intensity, detailed execution, and thematic boldness. His most celebrated works — particularly those depicting the Partition of India and philosophical interpretations of Allama Iqbal's Javid Nama — demonstrate a deep commitment to capturing historical and spiritual narratives. His compositions often blend realism with symbolic elements, creating visually powerful, almost cinematic scenes that evoke strong emotional responses. Critically, while his technique shows classical influences with meticulous draftsmanship, some art critics argue that his work tends toward the overtly didactic. His paintings often prioritize message over subtlety, sometimes bordering on melodrama. The scale and ambition of his historical canvases are impressive, but they can occasionally feel overwhelming or overly sentimental. Moreover, Engineer's style does not align with modernist or contemporary art trends;

instead, he remains firmly rooted in narrative realism, which gives his paintings wide public appeal but limits his critical acclaim among avant-garde art circles. Professor Dr Rahat Naveed Masud is one of the pioneering artists to have completed a PhD in Fine Arts (Art Practice) from London UK. She has been the principal of the College of Art & Design, University of the Punjab, Lahore and also Dean, Faculty of Art and Humanities. She has won several national awards in recognition of her work including the Presidential award 'Pride of Performance', the 'International Artist for Peace', Award, Shanghai, China; the Punjab Council of the Arts prize; the Artists' Association of Punjab Award; the Fatima Jinnah Award for 'meritorious performance in Painting'. Her work has been widely exhibited, representing Pakistan in exhibitions held in China, Iran, India, Korea, Oman, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Malaysia, Tan-

ania, Sri Lanka, USA and the UK. Amna Ismail Pataudi is a distinguished Pakistani artist, curator, art critic, and educationalist whose multifaceted contributions have significantly enriched the nation's art landscape. Pataudi's paintings are renowned for their meticulous technique and profound thematic depth. She often emphasizes the significance of still-life painting, considering it foundational to various art genres. Pataudi's commitment to art extends internationally. She co-curated the exhibition "Humanism: Flowering of the Being" at Asia House Gallery in London, featuring works by Pakistani and British-Pakistani artists, with proceeds supporting various charities. Moreover, she co-curated "Challenging Oeuvres" at the Alhambra Arts Centre in Lahore, presenting works by differently-abled artists from the Differently Abled Artists Consortium (DAAC), highlighting inclusivity in the arts.

India's anti-Pakistan narrative collapses internationally

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, the President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, the President of All Karachi Industrial Alliance, the Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board, and the President and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Monday that India's narrative on terrorism has collapsed on the international stage. He said that despite intense diplomatic lobbying, India has been unable to rally support from any country or international organization against Pakistan. Speaking to the business community, the veteran leader stated that Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif's offer of an independent and impartial investigation has shifted international opinion, further discrediting India's claims. Mian Zahid Hussain emphasized that India's media machinery has failed to generate meaningful traction, leading to disappointment

within the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "The global media has largely ignored India's accusations, while the flawed, contradictory, and baseless allegations have triggered scepticism even within India's own journalistic, military, and intellectual circles," he added. He pointed to the growing doubts surrounding the Pahalgam incident, noting that Indian citizens are now questioning the official narrative. "Narendra Modi and his extremist associates are resorting to negative tactics to cover up their incompetence and crumbling reputations," he said. India needs to acknowledge that the Pakistani nation stands united with its armed forces, a testament to their strength and resilience. Mian Zahid Hussain criticized India's regional ambitions, stating that its dream of establishing dominance clashed with ground realities. "The world has rejected India's propaganda, and Pakistan's stance in favour of regional peace is gaining significant international recognition,"

he noted, underlining the global support for Pakistan's stance. Addressing India's threats regarding the Indus Waters Treaty, he asserted that India cannot divert or halt river flows unilaterally without serious consequences. Pakistan's decision to close its airspace to Indian aircraft, resulting in estimated losses of \$400 million daily and causing significant delays, was cited as an effective countermeasure. "Tourism in India is suffering due to growing insecurity, and foreign direct investment is under threat. The poorly conceived and executed Pahalgam drama has backfired spectacularly," he said. Mian Zahid Hussain asserted that forming an international commission to investigate the Pahalgam incident would expose India's deceit, which is why New Delhi would likely resist any such move. "Modi knows well that any adventurism against Pakistan would meet a decisive response, much like the Abhinandan incident," he warned. He reiterated that Pakistan's

pursuit of peace should not be mistaken for weakness, adding, "By the grace of God, the Pakistani nation and armed forces are fully capable and ready to defend the country against any aggression." This reiteration reinforces Pakistan's strength and readiness to defend itself. Condemning what he described as a pattern of false flag operations by the Modi government, he said, "Modi's entire political strategy is rooted in anti-Muslim, anti-Pakistan, and extremist narratives. His reckless policies have led India into a dead end." Mian Zahid Hussain noted that the silence of international organizations and major powers is beginning to wane as the truth inevitably overcomes lies and deception. "The world is now paying greater attention to Pakistan's position, while the rejection of India's baseless campaign of misinformation is becoming more pronounced," he said, emphasizing the shift in global attention.

Venture Capitals remain optimistic as country's digital economy develops

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan's digital economy steadily gains traction, the South Asian country is attracting increasing interest from regional venture capital firms seeking untapped growth opportunities beyond traditional investment hubs. With a population of over 240 million—one of the largest in the world—Pakistan presents a sizable consumer base and a young, tech-savvy demographic. Nearly two-thirds of the population is under the age of 30, a statistic often cited by investors as a key indicator of digital potential. "Pakistan is one of the most promising but underappreciated digital markets in Asia," said Thomas G. Tsao, Co-Founder and Chairperson of Gobi Partners, during an exclusive interview with China Economic Net. Tsao noted that Pakistan reminded him of China back in 2002, where a vast population and a surge in internet users laid the groundwork for rapid digital scaling. "When we first entered Pakistan in 2018, the ecosystem was at a very early stage. But what we saw was a country full of energy, talent, and ambition," he highlighted the country's young talent and growing connectivity as core reasons for Gobi's early move into the market. Since then, Gobi has become one of several regional players participating in Pakistan's evolving startup ecosystem, launching landmark projects like the USD 30 million Techxila Fund I and Techxila Fund II (USD 50 million), investing in several Pakistani startups across sectors such as logistics, e-commerce, travel tech and fintech including Sasticket.pk, DealCart, PriceOye, Abhi and so on.—DNA

Pak's regional exports increase 3.16%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries increased by 3.16 per cent in the first nine months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) compared to the corresponding months of last year. The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$3.420 billion, which is 13.86 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$24.659 billion during July-March (2024-25), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Pakistan carried out its border trade with farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives.—APP

NUML IR deptt hosts NMUN 2025

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Department of International Relations at NUML University Islamabad successfully hosted NMUN 2025, centered around the theme "Where Diplomacy Meets Action." The event brought together aspiring diplomats to debate critical global issues through dynamic crisis scenarios and resolution drafting. Taha Atif Bhatti the Head organizer, along with the focal persons Ms. Aqsa Aslam and Ms. Warda Irum, played a key role



in ensuring the event's success. "NMUN 2025 reflects NUML's dedication to academic excellence and its mission to develop future global leaders," Bhatti shared.

NUML's leadership, including DG NUML Brig Shahzad Munir, Dean of FSS Dr. Riaz Shad, & HOD Dr. Sarwat Rauf, visited the event, offering their encouragement and support.

Gilani arrives in Morocco

The 3rd Edition of the South-South Parliamentary Dialogue Forum provides a platform for lawmakers to engage in meaningful discussions, exchange ideas, and work towards common goals

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani has arrived in Morocco to attend the 3rd Edition of the South-South Parliamentary Dialogue Forum. He was accompanied by a delegation of senators, including Senator Dost Ali Jessar from PPP, Senator Saadia Abbasi from PML-N, and Senator Khalida Ateeb from MQM,

said a news release received here on Monday. Upon arrival at Casablanca airport, the Chairman and his delegation were warmly received by Muhammad Salim bin Masood, Quaestor of the Parliament House of Councillors, and Jawwad Al Hilali, Vice President of the House of Councillors. They were also joined by Madam Rabia Kasuri,

Charge d'Affairs, who welcomed Chairman Gillani and his delegation, marking the beginning of a significant parliamentary engagement. The chairman Senate will deliver a speech at the forum, which will be attended by speakers and presidents from 31 countries. He will address key issues, share Pakistan's perspectives, and discuss ways

to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy, trade relations, artificial intelligence, and manufacturing cooperation between nations. This visit highlights Pakistan's commitment to fostering stronger international relations and cooperation.—APP

ICCI President for exploring non-traditional markets

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has emphasized the urgent need to explore greater opportunities in both conventional and non-conventional markets and products by expanding Pakistan's presence, particularly in neighboring countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, and China. He noted that strengthening regional trade ties is vital for ensuring the country's sustainable economic progress and prosperity, especially given the challenging times

ahead in the global arena. In a statement issued here on Monday, the ICCI President pointed out that Pakistan's current external economic gains have heavily relied on remittances from overseas Pakistanis, mainly those residing in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the United States. He cautioned that a worsening geopolitical environment could negatively affect the inflow of remittances and foreign direct investment. "In this context, it is critical for Pakistan to secure some tariff concessions from the United States before the Trump Administration finalizes new average tariffs for the country," Qureshi

stressed. He added that Pakistan's economic managers must give full focus to a few critical priorities, including stabilizing the external account and boosting exports, remittances, and foreign investment. Highlighting the role of the business community, Qureshi affirmed that the ICCI is determined to continue playing a proactive and expanded role in promoting Pakistan's economic interests. He said the ICCI stands ready to work closely with policymakers to navigate emerging challenges and drive the nation toward sustainable growth and development.

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US-China tariff war

DONALD Trump has upset the world order by slapping whopping taxes on imports. But his primary target is the Asian giant. In a dramatic return to trade confrontation, President Donald Trump has reignited economic tensions with China through an aggressive new wave of tariffs. Even as he announced a 90-day pause on implementing his tariff regime on other countries, the Trump administration escalated its protectionist agenda by raising taxes on Chinese imports to as high as 145 percent, citing unfair trade practices and national security concerns. Branded as part of his newly-declared 'Liberation Day' initiative, the measures included a universal 10 percent tariff on all imports. Beijing swiftly responded by increasing its own tariffs on US goods to 125 percent, setting the stage for another high-stakes trade standoff. The revival of Trump's combative trade strategy not only marks a pivotal moment in US-China relations but also raises urgent questions about the future of global trade stability and power competition. At the heart of this renewed escalation lies a dispute over trade imbalances or tariffs and a broader reconfiguration of the global power struggle. What we are witnessing is a strategic recalibration by major actors as they attempt to reposition themselves within an emerging world order marked by uncertainty and flux. Unlike in the past, today's leading powers are more assertive, centralised, and ideologically confident. This new environment oscillates between conflict and cooperation like a pendulum, continually redefining the limits and possibilities of engagement. As each actor projects its influence across political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions—both domestically and in their respective regions—their stability and coherence enhance their capacity to shape the global landscape. For this reason, the confrontation is unlikely to dissipate anytime soon. Rather, it has become an enduring feature of an international system in which rising powers are no longer merely reacting but actively rewriting the rules of the game. What appears on the surface as a trade dispute is, in reality, a manifestation of a much deeper and more consequential struggle for global leadership. The fundamental hypothesis here is that this is not merely about tariffs or economic leverage—it is a contest between two systemic actors seeking to shape the architecture of a new international order. This confrontation is playing out most visibly in the economic and commercial realm. Still, the tools and arenas of competition are fluid. It could spill over into the political, military, or security domains at any moment. In fact, in the cultural and social spheres, this rivalry has been unfolding for quite some time. The persistent divergence in values, governance models, and soft power narratives underscores the intensity of the clash. What we are witnessing, then, is not a policy disagreement but a geopolitical power play with long-term structural implications. More accurately, we are witnessing a form of partial decoupling—an uneasy unraveling of interdependence between the world's two biggest economies that stops short of total disengagement. This process is neither linear nor absolute, and much of its ambiguity stems from the internal complexities within both countries. Dragon in the shadows On the one hand, the US is grappling with deep political polarisation, recurring institutional dysfunction, and an increasingly volatile electoral climate.

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Saudi Arabia hosting FIFA World Cup 2034

THE Kingdom is rapidly becoming one of the world's top venues for sporting events as part of Vision 2030. Saudi Arabia's FIFA World Cup in 2034 will showcase the Kingdom's progress – exemplifying its cultural depth and administrative capabilities, as well as its attractive tax regime and investment opportunities for FDI. However, the cost of building state-of-the-art facilities is expected to be high. A cost-benefit analysis of the Saudi dream of hosting the world's largest sporting event is worth examining. The World Cup in Qatar was a significant investment, with the country spending \$200-300 billion on infrastructure over a decade. The short-term benefits from visitors' spending and broadcasting rights are estimated to be about 1 percent of the country's gross domestic product. Qatar's visitor expenditure on tourism and other revenue from WC-related programming is projected to be between \$2.3 and \$4.1 billion, representing 0.7-1.0 percent of GDP in 2022. Indirect benefits include higher foreign direct investment and increased tourism resulting from the event. Qatar managed to increase non-hydrocarbon income by 40 percent during the decade of preparation for the World Cup by investing in infrastructure and diversifying the economy.= Saudi Vision 2030 emphasizes the importance of investing in the sports sector, as it can support host nations and lead to social and economic development. The Kingdom plans to build 15 new stadiums or refurbish existing ones in Riyadh, Jeddah, Alkhobar, Abha and NEOM. In Riyadh, six out of eight stadiums are completely new, a significant development compared to London's 22. Jeddah is expected to build three new stadiums and refurbish an existing one. The new NEOM Stadium, located more than 350 meters above ground, is expected to provide a unique experience and increase the non-hydrocarbon share of GDP. Upkeep and using these stadiums is crucial for long-term gains, as maintenance costs could be substantial. New hotels for the tournament will include FIFA HQ hotels in Riyadh's New Murabba district, FIFA VIP and venue hotels in Khobar's Al-Olaya District, and a proposed VIP and venue hotel west of Abha. King Salman International Airport is expected to be extended to accommodate 100 million passengers per year, a 170 percent increase compared to 2023. Saudi Arabia experienced significant growth in foreign tourism in 2023, according to the UN's list of countries with the highest growth rate. Large sporting events can improve a host nation's reputation globally by encouraging travel and cross-cultural interaction. These events can also boost a country's self-awareness, drive and economic progress. Short-term economic gains, such as increased consumer spending and job creation, can be achieved. However, the actual outcomes of previous World Cups vary. For example, the South Korean World Cup brought more than 2 million extra foreign visitors, while Qatar saw a significant increase in tourism post-WC. Russia received 570,000 tourists during the event, while some regional centers saw a 90 percent increase in numbers. Sporting events can also draw away potential tourists from popular areas, potentially causing negative short-term impacts. Smart marketing and rewards for Muslims spectators could help mitigate this impact.

Pahalgam: Indians stand against Modi's hatred

Qamar Bashir



While Modi's hollow threats were taken seriously by the Pakistani government, which retaliated with "equal and proportionate" counteractions, the people of Pakistan brushed aside all threats. Contrary to being terrified by Indian war cries and threats to strangle their population by cutting off water, Pakistanis felt jubilant and galvanized, seeing echoes of India's humiliation during the failed 2019 surgical strikes. Instead of cowering, the Pakistani population displayed resilience and confidence, refusing to be bullied. Internationally too, while governments condemned the Pahalgam incident, they notably refrained...

THE recent Pahalgam terrorist attack was a moment of immense sorrow. Yet, what followed revealed something even more profound: a sharp disconnect between the Indian government's rhetoric of blame and revenge and the people's call for sanity, justice, and unity. Across religions—Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs alike—ordinary citizens rejected the narrative of war and communal hatred. They demanded that the tragedy be addressed within its own local dynamics, not be weaponized into a new wave of regional or religious conflict. While politicians rushed to escalate tensions, threatening military action, suspending diplomatic ties, and even proposing to abrogate the Indus Waters Treaty, a different voice rose from the streets and social media: the voice of the people. Ordinary Indians and Kashmiris expressed fatigue with political exploitation of tragedies. They insisted that the attack be treated strictly as a criminal act, calling for justice through proper investigation and prosecution, rather than communal or geopolitical confrontation. This episode exposed the widening gulf between the Indian government's escalationist approach and the people's yearning for peace. While Modi and his allies chose the path of military threats, diplomatic brinkmanship, and communal rhetoric, ordinary citizens across India—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs—embraced a vision of unity, compassion, and moral clarity. Despite the horror of the attack, it was the ordinary citizens – not the government – who showed true patriotism. Across Kashmir and the rest of India, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians came together in solidarity, rejecting the poisonous narrative of communal hatred. In Kashmir, locals risked their lives to save stranded tourists, carried the wounded on horseback, and offered shelter without asking about religion. Indian Muslims nationwide condemned the attack unequivocally, delivering anti-terror sermons from over 550,000 mosques and praying for the victims. Candlelight marches, shutdowns in mourning, and spontaneous calls for peace reflected the real spirit of India. Many Indians, including prominent journalists, analysts, and activists, pointed out the bitter irony that by promoting hatred and aggressive retaliation, the

Modi government was advancing the very agenda terrorists intended. Social media erupted with criticism, observing that the terrorists had aimed to ignite Hindu-Muslim violence—and official rhetoric was playing directly into that plan. While Modi's hollow threats were taken seriously by the Pakistani government, which retaliated with "equal and proportionate" counteractions, the people of Pakistan brushed aside all threats. Contrary to being terrified by Indian war cries and threats to strangle their population by cutting off water, Pakistanis felt jubilant and galvanized, seeing echoes of India's humiliation during the failed 2019 surgical strikes. Instead of cowering, the Pakistani population displayed resilience and confidence, refusing to be bullied. Internationally too, while governments condemned the Pahalgam incident, they notably refrained from blaming Pakistan directly. Thus, Modi's orchestrated attempt to weaponize the tragedy – to whip up nationalist frenzy at home and intimidate Pakistan abroad – fell flat, achieving none of its objectives and leaving him isolated on the global stage. Citizens questioned how, despite the presence of nearly 900,000 Indian troops stationed across Kashmir, a heavily patrolled tourist area could have been attacked. Many Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs emphasized that the tragedy demanded honest answers and better protection for civilians, not external blame or religious polarization. Testimonies from the ground painted a strikingly different picture than the government's war narrative. Hindu survivors recounted how Muslim villagers in Kashmir rescued and sheltered them, hid them from the attackers, fed them, and ensured their safe passage to airports. One Hindu tourist from Maharashtra said, "We were trapped, terrified. Muslim families opened their homes to us, fed us, and gave us courage. Without them, we would not be alive today." Another Sikh tourist from Punjab shared, "Our Muslim brothers risked their lives to shield us. One of them even got injured while trying to get us to safety. We owe them everything." A local Kashmiri Muslim explained, "We saw them as guests, not Hindus or Sikhs. Terrorists wanted bloodshed between communities. We wanted to protect peace." These powerful stories spread

across social media but were largely ignored by major news outlets, which continued to amplify calls for retaliation. A particularly moving testimony came from a young Hindu boy, whose interview with major channels and social media went viral. In a voice trembling with emotion, he pointed out the glaring security failure, stating that although the Indian army maintained a base near the tourist spot, not even a police constable or military guard was present when the attack happened. The terrorists, he noted, came freely, carried out their heinous act, and fled without facing any resistance. His words resonated with millions, exposing the urgent need for accountability rather than externalized blame. One activist summed it up: "When Muslims were lynched, there were no diplomatic crises. Now, when Hindus are attacked, it becomes a matter of national honor? Justice must be the same for all, or it is not justice." The hypocrisy was not lost on the public. Many saw the selective outrage as proof that communal divisions were politically convenient rather than morally grounded. Perhaps most strikingly, this tragedy revealed a new assertiveness among Kashmiris. They rejected any collective blame and firmly asserted their Indian identity. A Kashmiri youth leader stated, "We are Indians. We have nothing to do with Pakistan. This attack is a crime against our people too. Don't treat us as suspects. Treat us as victims demanding justice." Kashmiris held rallies condemning the attack, organized interfaith prayers, and assisted stranded tourists without discrimination. Their message was clear: they were citizens of India, demanding equal protection and dignity. The aftermath of the Pahalgam attack could have been a descent into greater darkness. But thanks to the wisdom of the common people—Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs—there is still hope. They have demonstrated that terrorism can be defeated not only by military means but by unity, humanity, and a refusal to surrender to hatred. If political leaders fail to learn from this, they will find themselves increasingly out of touch with the true spirit of the nation. The people have spoken clearly: they will not be pawns in a game of hate. They will stand together.

Palestine peace reality or illusion?

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Initially, there was a national consensus within Israel on the necessity of eliminating Hamas. Yet the impracticality of simultaneously achieving the release of hostages and the destruction of Hamas soon became apparent. According to data compiled by The New York Times, between October 2023 and early March 2025, 41 hostages perished while in captivity—some due...

LESS than two months after agreeing to a phased ceasefire with Hamas, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recommended military operations in the Gaza Strip. On March 18, the Israeli Air Force launched strikes on designated military sites, resulting in the deaths of over 400 Palestinians, including more than 300 women and children, as reported by the Hamas-controlled Ministry of Health in Gaza. This escalation marked one of the most severe episodes of violence in the ongoing conflict. The temporary truce had facilitated the release of 30 hostages captured by Hamas during its unprecedented assault on Israel on October 7, 2023, as well as the repatriation of eight deceased captives. More recently, the Israeli government proposed another ceasefire arrangement, contingent upon the return of 11 additional hostages and 16 bodies. Nevertheless, the prospect of sustained peace remains elusive. Since the events of October 7 which led to the deaths of approximately 1,250 Israelis Netanyahu's strategic objectives have remained twofold: the liberation of all Israeli hostages and the complete dismantling of Hamas. However, these objectives are inherently contradictory. Hamas refuses to participate in any peace initiative that implies its eradication. As long as Israel remains committed to Hamas's destruction, the group's leadership has a significant incentive to retain hostages as a deterrent against targeted Israeli military operations. This strategic deadlock implies that even if ceasefire negotiations resume, both parties are likely to engage in delaying tactics. Hamas may withhold hostages to prolong its leverage, while Israel may resist implementing phases of any agreement that allow Hamas to maintain its governance capabilities. Consequently, any tentative agreements are vulnerable to collapse before their completion. Netanyahu, meanwhile, has grown more confident in the efficacy of military action, citing its strategic impact on regional adversaries such as Iran and Hezbollah. Under the Trump administration—unlike the more cautious Biden administration—Israel appears to enjoy greater latitude in its military operations. This was symbolized by Netanyahu's expedited visit to Washington to meet President Trump, signaling the value he places on their political alignment. Emboldened by this geopolitical support, Israeli military

leadership has proposed extensive plans, including a potential reoccupation of Gaza. Concurrently, Netanyahu's far-right coalition partners have revived proposals advocating for the large-scale displacement of Gaza's population. However, it remains uncertain whether Netanyahu will fully embrace these extreme positions, particularly in light of the unpredictability of Trump's political posture and the logistical burden such operations would impose on the Israeli military. As a result, Netanyahu is likely to pursue a strategy of calculated ambiguity continuing military operations while preserving political cohesion among his allies. Initially, there was a national consensus within Israel on the necessity of eliminating Hamas. Yet the impracticality of simultaneously achieving the release of hostages and the destruction of Hamas soon became apparent. According to data compiled by The New York Times, between October 2023 and early March 2025, 41 hostages perished while in captivity—some due to inadequate conditions, while others were inadvertently killed during Israeli military incursions. Survivors reported inhumane conditions, including confinement in tunnels with minimal sustenance, medical neglect, and, in some cases, torture. Israel's failure to prioritize its objectives has led to the partial fulfillment of both. Although numerous senior Hamas figures have been killed including Gaza's de facto leader, Yahya Sinwar the organization continues to function and wield power. Its remaining leaders utilize hostages, primarily soldiers, as strategic assets to shield themselves from targeted assassinations. For Netanyahu, only two outcomes are acceptable: either Hamas's unconditional capitulation or the removal of its leadership from Gaza, or the continuation of military operations until such an outcome is realized. Following Trump's return to the presidency, expectations that the United States might pressure Israel into a long-term ceasefire have diminished. While the Trump administration did initially encourage a truce in January, its approach has since become inconsistent. Recent American proposals have failed to generate meaningful progress, and Trump himself has oscillated between indifference and implausible suggestions—such as a U.S.-led redevelopment of Gaza as a tourist destination. The administration has not con-

fronted the core contradiction of the peace process: Israel's demand for Hamas's disbandment and Hamas's refusal to relinquish its ideological mission. Meanwhile, regional developments have lessened Israel's perceived need for a negotiated settlement. Hamas's operational capabilities have been significantly degraded, and Israel has achieved military advantages across multiple fronts. Hezbollah, for instance, was compelled to accept a ceasefire under humiliating terms, and Iran suffered setbacks following military exchanges with Israel. Moreover, Israel seized parts of southern Syria after the fall of the Assad regime in December. These successes have emboldened Netanyahu, who now responds more aggressively to perceived threats, as evidenced by a March airstrike on a Hezbollah facility in Beirut. While the Biden administration had sought to moderate Israeli actions following October 7, its influence waned after Israeli forces entered Rafah in May 2024, an act met with American disapproval and a subsequent suspension of military aid. Trump's presidency has removed this restraint. His broader geopolitical views—including support for territorial acquisition by force—have further encouraged aggressive Israeli policies. During a February meeting, Trump questioned why Israel had not already expanded its control over Syrian territory following Assad's fall, a notion Netanyahu later discussed with his cabinet. Israel now finds itself in a dominant position. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have proposed a comprehensive plan to fully reoccupy Gaza, mobilize reserves, and relocate northern Gazans to the south, thereby consolidating control over the entire territory. The IDF's new Chief of Staff, Eyal Zamir, appears amenable to the idea of establishing a long-term Israeli military presence in Gaza a departure from the stance of his predecessor, Herzi Halevi, who resigned in March 2025. Although the Trump administration has withdrawn from overt discussions about demographic engineering in Gaza, certain far-right Israeli politicians continue to advocate for large-scale population transfers under the guise of "voluntary emigration." In practical terms, however, such proposals would necessitate significant coercion and military pressure to achieve their objectives.

Briefs

PTI senators
urge govt to
convene APC

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warned the PTI leader. His remarks come in response to India's unilateral decision to suspend the six-decade-old Indus Waters Treaty and also taking other steps against Pakistan in the aftermath of an attack on tourists in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). For his part, Leader of the Opposition in Senate Senator Shibli Faraz said: "We are united when it comes to defending Pakistan." Taking the floor, Faraz emphasised national unity and said that the country was grappling with both internal and external issues. Berating New Delhi, the PTI leader said that India has made every effort to break Pakistan and continues to build an anti-Pakistan narrative. He said that they could not take the water threat by India as a "political statement" and termed the move as an act of war. The PTI leader said that the enemy planning a lethal attack on Pakistan. Earlier, Senator Irfan Siddiqui said that the international community has rejected India's false claims and propaganda against Pakistan following the Pahalgam incident. "The world did not support India's stance or its fabrications. Their propaganda has been exposed," he said while speaking on the Senate floor.

Bench reconstituted for hearing...

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Justice Tariq Mehmood Bajwa has now been included alongside Justice Rizvi to hear the bail applications filed by the PTI founder. Starting May 5, the newly constituted bench will take up Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) and National Accountability Bureau (NAB) cases. Meanwhile, Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh is set to take up his new assignment at the Bahawalpur Bench from the same date. The Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court has officially approved and issued the fresh roster of judges. The PTI founder had earlier filed separate bail applications in eight cases after the anti-terrorism court dismissed his initial pleas.

PM Shehbaz announces plans to...

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PM Shehbaz noted that the contemporary payment method fixed the numerous issues with the previous one. The prime minister said that the modernization efforts had produced great results and suggested that the use of digital wallets will spread across the country as provinces would be incorporated into the digital payment system through an integrated framework. PM Shehbaz pledged that 100% of the monies will be used digitally by the following year. During the ceremony, Secretary Benazir Income Support Programme Amir Ahmed Ali gave a detailed briefing on the PM Ramazan Relief Package and digital wallets. On the occasion, the prime minister gave away honorary shields to officers from public and private organizations who played a significant role in implementing the PM Ramazan Relief Package.

Relevant provisions...

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since 1967 and he will argue on four points including the right to appeal for those facing military trials. The AGP stated this before the Constitutional Bench of the SCP headed by Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan and comprising Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali, Justice Naeem Akhter Afghan and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan. Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan, while presenting his arguments, said that he would address three main points. He noted that Khawaja Harris, counsel for the Ministry of Defence, had already presented arguments regarding the events of May 9, and he would now provide additional details to the court.

Govt must invest in hockey, says Australian HC Neil Hawkins

R.S Titans clinch thrilling final of Rising Stars Hockey League 2025



ISLAMABAD: The R.S Aviators and R.S Titans posing for a picture along with Australian and Brunei High Commissioners, after the prize distribution ceremony. Romanian DHM Eduard Preda also in picture. – DNA

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a gripping finale to the Rising Stars Hockey League 2025, R.S Titans emerged victorious by defeating the Aviators with a close scoreline of 2-1. The match was a testament to the growing popularity and spirit of hockey in Pakistan. Both teams displayed outstanding skill, determination, and sportsmanship throughout the match, making it an exciting contest until

the very last minute. The Titans managed to secure a narrow lead and successfully defended it against the persistent attacks of the Aviators. Adding a special touch to the event, Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins represented the Aviators team. During the prize distribution ceremony, Mr. Hawkins praised the players and organizers for their dedication. In his speech, he urged the government to invest more in hockey, reminding everyone that it is Pakistan's national game. He also commended the management for organizing

such a successful league on a self-finance basis, highlighting the community's commitment to promoting the sport. The High Commissioner of Brunei, Kamal Ahmad, also addressed the audience. He applauded the teamwork and spirit displayed by both finalist teams and expressed his admiration for the organization of the event, saying such initiatives are crucial for nurturing young talent. Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Romania, Eduard Preda, shared an interesting personal note during his speech, humorously stating that

he might be the only person in Romania who plays field hockey. He expressed his desire to promote and introduce hockey in Romania, inspired by the passion he witnessed during the league. The Rising Stars Hockey League 2025 has been a beacon of hope for the revival of hockey in Pakistan, and the thrilling final between R.S Titans and Aviators is expected to inspire a new generation of players. The success of the event demonstrated how collective efforts, even on limited resources, can breathe new life into traditional sports.

International Basketball training camp concludes

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The International Basketball Training and Coaching Camp, organized by the Federal Basketball Association (FBBAA), successfully concluded in Islamabad. According to Federal Basketball Association General Secretary Ouj E Zahoor, young players participated enthusiastically in the camp, receiving modern training to enhance their skills and performance. Renowned coaches Luke Elie and Jacob Kim, affiliated with the American organization Coaches Team International (CTI) Sports, conducted various sessions at Bahria University. They provided players with expert guidance on fitness, skills development, technique, combination play, attacking strategies, and other key areas of the game. Ouj E Zahoor expressed deep gratitude to American coaches Luke Elie and Jacob Kim for sharing their valuable experience, knowledge, and passion with the young athletes. Both players and local coaches gained significant insights during the training sessions. He also thanked Bahria University for their outstanding support, which enabled the provision of international-standard facilities for the camp. On the final day of the camp, friendly matches were organized among the players, and certificates were distributed to all participants in recognition of their dedication and achievements. The Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) has also welcomed the joint venture as part of its ongoing efforts to promote basketball nationwide. "This is yet another significant step toward elevating the standard of basketball in Pakistan," a PBBF spokesperson noted. "International partnerships like these are vital for our players' growth and the development of our coaching infrastructure." The CTI-FBBAA training camp reflects the growing commitment of key stakeholders to foster a new generation of basketball talent and marks a promising new chapter in Pakistan's sporting landscape.

Joaquin Niemann wins LIV Golf Mexico City with stellar final round

MEXICO: Joaquin Niemann was virtually flawless Sunday, firing a 6-under-par 65 at Club de Golf Chapultepec to earn his third championship of the season at LIV Golf Mexico City. Niemann began his day two shots off the lead, but three birdies on his first seven holes put him in an enviable position. He added birdies on Nos. 10, 12, 16 and 18 to finish three strokes in front of the field at 16 under for the tourney. The win came in front of family and friends. "Yeah, it's special," Niemann said. "My mom came all the way. I think the first time my mom has seen me win, so that's pretty cool. So yeah, I had my mom here, Didi, my wife, my friends, my team. It's been a really good couple months, so yeah, happy." The Torque GC captain from Chile had one bogey, on the 14th. Following his third tournament win, Niemann remains in the lead for the individual season-long championship, a title that narrowly evaded him in 2024 as he finished second to Jon Rahm. He also locked in a spot at the US Open in June. "Yeah, it's nice," Niemann said. "I feel like I wanted to be there (at the US Open), so yeah, it's great to keep doing what I'm doing,

hitting the ball great, making putts, and yeah, hopefully keep it rolling." The 26-year-old was barely pressed late, with the best charge coming from the incredible round turned in by Ripper GC's Lucas Herbert, a 10-under 61 beauty that featured an eagle and eight birdies. Herbert essentially ran out of runway to complete the comeback, coming into the day too far behind the leaders to catch up. However, he did help Cameron Smith's (72) Ripper squad finish in second in the team standings, behind Jon Rahm's (68) Legion XIII. "Just one of those rounds where everything comes together," Herbert said. "I thought I played pretty decent the last two days, I just didn't get many breaks, and I just felt like today every time there was a line ball sort of thing I got the right kick and I'd make a putt where I needed to or just anything — just that sort of stuff. It just kept the momentum going through the round. "Look, I played great, really enjoyed feeling everything I felt the last few holes, but it's just one of those rounds where it all just clicks for you, and it was a pretty cool feeling to do it at an event like this." – DNA

London Marathon breaks world record for most finishers

The 2025 London Marathon set a new world record for the number of finishers despite hot conditions during the event's 45th edition

LONDON: The number of runners to have completed the 26.2-mile route had surpassed the previous record of 55,646 set by the New York Marathon in November. That tally is expected to grow further into the night as more runners finish on The Mall. Hugh Brasher, chief executive of London Marathon Events, said: "The TCS London Marathon is the world's greatest marathon, and it is now officially the world's biggest marathon. It is difficult to put into words the emotions of today. "The support from the hundreds of thousands lining the streets has been unprec-

edented and is so important to those participants running for so many good causes. "The good the TCS London Marathon does is unrivalled. The feeling of this day and the benefits that running gives people can change people's lives. We want as many people as possible to share that feeling, so if anyone has been inspired by what they have seen today, now is the time to enter the ballot for the 2026 TCS London Marathon." More than 840,000 people applied for the ballot to enter this year's race, breaking the world record of 578,304 for the 2024 edition. Of UK applicants 49% were female, while there was a 105% increase in applications from people aged between 20-29. Ethiopia's TigstAssefa surged to victory in the elite women's race in a world record for a women's only field, while Kenya's Sebastian Sawe triumphed in the men's event. It was a Swiss double in the wheelchair races for the second year running as Catherine Debrunner broke her own course record in the women's race and Marcel Hug stormed to his seventh victory in the men's. On Saturday, more than 15,000 young people competed in the Mini London Marathon, making it the biggest since the event started in 1986. – Agencies

Barcelona edge Real Madrid to win Copa del Rey

Catalans won first major trophy of Hansi Flick's reign as coach and a record-extending 32nd Spanish cup

DNA

SEVILLE: Barcelona defender Jules Kounde struck deep in extra-time to decide a gripping Copa del Rey Clasico final on Saturday in Seville, earning his side a 3-2 win over rivals Real Madrid. The Catalans, aiming for a quadruple this season, won the first major trophy of Hansi Flick's reign as coach and a record-extending 32nd Spanish cup in dramatic fashion. Pedri sent Barcelona ahead at La Cartuja but two Real Madrid goals in seven second-half minutes, from Kylian Mbappe and Aurelien Tchouameni, pulled the Spanish and European champions level. However, Ferran Torres struck in the 84th minute to take the game to extra-time and Kounde drilled home to win it for the La Liga leaders.

Substituted Madrid defender Antonio Rudiger was sent off in the final seconds for appearing to throw an object onto the pitch towards the referee. Madrid, who started with top scorer Mbappe on the bench after an ankle injury, suffered an early setback when left-back Ferland Mendy, playing his first game for six weeks, suffered a thigh injury. Carlo Ancelotti sent on Fran Garcia in his place, with the job of shackling Barcelona's dazzling teenage winger Lamine Yamal. The 17-year-old Spain star, who dyed his hair

blond for the game, burst past him with ease as Barca threatened Thibaut Courtois' goal increasingly. The Catalans, who won the first two Clasicos this season in La Liga and the Spanish Super Cup, scoring nine goals in the process, controlled the ball. They took the lead after 28 minutes, Pedri placing the ball into the top corner with precision and power from the edge of the box. It was a sensational goal, starting with a smart Pau Cubarsi interception in his own half. Pedri spread the play out to Yamal on the

right, who cut inside and held the ball up until the Canary Islander reached the box and had a sight of goal. Madrid had been focused on defending but Barcelona's opener brought them out of their shell — and also brought Mbappe off the bench to warm up. Jude Bellingham started and finished a superb move but was offside, and Vinicius Junior would have won a penalty as Inigo Martinez hacked him down but had also strayed off in the build-up. Barcelona could have doubled their lead, with Dani Olmo's

corner evading several players and bouncing off the far post, with Cubarsi unable to get there as Dani Ceballos held him back. Referee Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea was lenient with some heated Madrid tackles, perhaps cowed by Friday's drama as the Spanish champions seethed at his pre-match comments denouncing attacks on officials by the club's television channel. Madrid sent Mbappe on for Rodrygo Goes at half-time and soon they began to work Barcelona goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny with Vinicius and Mbappe coming close. Mbappe pulled Madrid level almost on his own in the 70th minute. The striker surged forward and was brought down on the edge of the box by Frenkie de Jong. Mbappe took the free-kick himself and fired a low effort in off the post. Seven minutes later Madrid took the lead, Tchouameni finding space to head home ArdaGuler's corner past the helpless Szczesny. Barcelona responded when Yamal played a delicious pass over the top for Torres, which drew both Rudiger and Courtois, but the Spaniard got there first and rolled home. Controversy unsurprisingly reared its head before the match headed to extra-time. Barcelona clamoured for a penalty when Rudiger appeared to bring down Torres, and then were awarded one deep in stoppage time as Raphinha tumbled under pressure from Raul Asencio.



Pakistan YouTube channels...

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Indian authorities to accuse the Pakistani channels of spreading "misleading and provocative content." Other affected channels include independent journalist platforms and thematic channels. Indian authorities alleged that these channels were disseminating misleading information against the Indian government and military, although no specific examples were publicly cited. Collectively, the banned channels had a subscriber base exceeding approximately 66 million. Full list of Pakistani YouTube channels restricted by India, Geo News — 18.1 million subscribers, ARY News — 14.6 million subscribers, Samaa TV — 12.7 million subscribers, Bol News — 7.85 million subscribers, ShoaibAkhtar100mph — 3.81M subscribers, GNN — 3.54 million subscribers, Dawn News TV — 1.96 million subscribers, Suno News HD — 1.36 million subscribers, Irshad Bhatti — 829k subscribers, Raftar — 805k subscribers, Muneeb Farooq — 165k subscribers, Asma Shirazi — 133k subscribers, Umar Cheema Exclusive — 125k subscribers, Pakistan Reference — 288k subscribers, Uzair Cricket — 288k subscribers, Razi Nama — 270k subscribers, Samaa Sports — 73.5k subscribers.

17 more terrorists killed at...

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the fight against terrorism," he said, reaffirming that Pakistan's armed forces remain "resolute in defending the country's borders and eradicating the scourge of terrorism."

68 killed in US strikes...

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On Sunday, the US said it had hit more than 800 targets in Yemen since mid-March, killing hundreds of Houthi rebels, including members of the group's leadership. Just hours later, Houthi media said the latest barrage by US forces had hit a migrant detention centre. "The civil defence has announced that 68 African migrants were killed and 47 others wounded in the US attack targeting a centre for illegal migrants in the city of Saada," the Houthi's Al-Masirah TV said.

Briefs

PSX
witnesses
bearish trend

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 1,405.45 points, a negative change of 1.22 percent, closing at 114,063.90 points as compared to 115,469.35 points on last trading day. A total of 423,938,288 shares were traded during the day as compared to 471,072,967 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 26.458 billion against Rs 27.310 billion on the last trading day. As many as 449 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 93 of them recorded gains and 313 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 43 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 23,705,546 shares at Rs 9.30 per share, Power Cement with 21,585,733 shares at Rs 13.29 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 18,309,847 shares at Rs 1.26 per share. PIA Holding Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 326.25 per share closing at Rs 3,608.54 whereas runner-up was Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs 260.00 rise in its share price to close at Rs 23,161.00. Sazgar Engineering Works Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 50.25 per share price, closing at Rs 1,309.74, whereas the runner-up Sapphire Textile Mills Limited with Rs 47.20 decline in its per share price to Rs 1,055.70.—APP

Haroon for
resolving
furniture
sector issues

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Monday directed the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) to coordinate with Furniture Manufacturers Association to resolve their issues Chairing a meeting with Furniture Manufacturers Association, the SAPM said Pakistan possesses immense potential and produces high-quality products in the furniture manufacturing sector, said a news release. The representative of the Furniture Manufacturers Faisal Mohsin and Mrs Zahra Faisal appealed to the government to provide greater support to the industry. They pointed out that furniture manufacturers are facing challenges related to export awareness, skills development, taxation procedures, and documentation. He emphasized that the furniture sector holds great potential to enhance Pakistan's exports. The SAPM noted that a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises are engaged in this sector, contributing significantly to the economy.—APP

Rupee sheds
09 paisas
against US
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday depreciated by 09 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 281.06 against the previous day's closing of Rs 280.97. 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 increased by 03 paisa to close at Rs 319.01 against the last day's closing of Rs 318.98, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.95, whereas an increase of 88 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 374.35 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 373.47. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 03 and 02 paisa each to close at Rs 76.52 and Rs 74.92 respectively.—APP

Pak-Kazakhstan affirms expansion
of bilateral trade, investment ties

Terming connectivity as the cornerstone of regional economic development, Jam Kamal welcomed Kazakhstan's interest in utilizing Pakistan's seaports at Karachi and Gawadar for its trade. He said for Kazakhstan, it is the shortest and most effective route to the Arabian Sea and beyond

KARACHI: Pakistan Kazakhstan Business forum, took place on Monday, with renewed affirmation to expand bilateral cooperation in various sectors and signing of two memorandum of understanding. Kazakh Minister of Transport Marat Karabayev, Federal Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Federal investment Minister Qaiser Sheikh, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce Rana Ehsaan Afzal Khan, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, CEO and Secretary TDAP, Business community representatives attended the forum. Over 150 delegates from all regions of Kazakhstan are participating in this important business forum that brought together key stakeholders from Pakistan and Kazakhstan including the private sector engaging in these trade relationship dialogues. The Commerce Minister Jam Kamal, addressing the forum, underscored that Pakistan and Kazakhstan enjoy deep-rooted historical, cultural, and fraternal ties. Our relationship is built on mutual respect,

shared values, and a common vision for regional peace and prosperity, he said adding that the forum reaffirms the shared commitment of two countries to deepen economic engagement and foster a long-lasting relationship. Both the brotherly countries are signing a comprehensive road map for enhancing cooperation in key sectors, including trade, investment, industrial collaboration, and regional connectivity, the Commerce minister informed. He added that the road map reflects a well-defined and forward-looking approach that will guide our partnership in the years to come.

He, on the occasion, announced that Pakistan and Kazakhstan have finalized a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of e-commerce. This MOU represents a milestone in our efforts to embrace digital transformation and create a modern, inclusive, and innovation driven economic framework. "E-commerce will be a catalyst in facilitating cross-border trade,

empowering SMEs, and opening up new avenues for entrepreneurs, particularly our youth and women," he said. Terming connectivity as the cornerstone of regional economic development, Jam Kamal welcomed Kazakhstan's interest in utilizing Pakistan's seaports at Karachi and Gawadar for its trade. He said for Kazakhstan, it is the shortest and most effective route to the Arabian Sea and beyond. He emphasized early finalization of the transit trade agreement between the two countries to provide an institutional framework, which would further benefit and enhance trade numbers through seamless movement of transit cargo of both countries across our seaports, land borders and territories. Jam Kamal hoped that business to business contacts will help to explore new ventures and forge partnerships across a wider spectrum of sectors like textile, agriculture, food processing, pharmaceutical, leather, ICT, and many more for mutual benefit. To ensure investor confidence, remove bottlenecks

and fast-track projects, Pakistan has a very efficient institutional mechanism through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), he said and invited the Kazakh investors to take advantage of these reforms and expand their businesses. The Commerce Minister reiterated Pakistan's deep commitment to strengthening its partnership with Kazakhstan for building bridges of cooperation, unlocking shared potential, and contributing meaningfully to regional peace, prosperity, and integration. The Minister of Transport, Republic of Kazakhstan, Marat Karabayev, highlighted main features and potential of Kazakhstan's trade, industry, export, investment, mineral and other natural resources, and identified oil and gas, construction and material, textile, leather and wool, Agro-chemical, mining, pharmaceutical as potential sector for cooperation. He informed that Kazakhstan President, Kassym Jomart Tokayev is set to visit Pakistan by the end of this year. Our prime minister attach-

es importance to expand relations with Pakistan, he said and highlighted that Kazakhstan's commitment towards bolstering economic cooperation and partnership is evident from participation of deputy governors of all the regions in this forum. The Kazakh minister said that his government finances a business that brings technology, expertise and knowledge. "It's not a matter of the money or it's not a matter of the realistic investment. If you know the technology, if you have knowledge, we as a government can finance your business in Kazakhstan. That is possible", he stated. Referring to vast deposits of iron, aluminum, copper, lead, lithium, tungsten, molybdenum and tantalum in Kazakhstan he said that Kazakhstan has abundant raw materials and we want to set up industries for manufacturing of finished products. The Coordinator to PM, Rana Ehsaan Afzal Khan, underscored the improvement in economic indicators and said that Pakistan's economy is on a positive trajectory, and sig-

nificant progress is reflective of the untapped potential. He highlighted that opportunities exist in various sectors for Pakistan and Kazakhstan to strengthen bilateral ties and foster multifaceted cooperation and collaboration. Secretary Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) Sheryar Taj, said that textile, agro and food, engineering and manufacturing, as leading exporting sectors of Pakistan while we also offer land route and port connectivity based transit trade opportunities as well as potential in meat, pharmaceutical and mineral sectors. Director International Trade NLC Brig Zaheer-ud-din Babar, Vice President FPCCI Asif Inam, executives of Kazakh Railways, Investment and Trade authorities also spoke to the forum and shed light on potential and opportunities in their relevant sectors. On the sidelines of the Forum, extensive B2B engagements were seen and visiting delegates discussed opportunities of cooperation in various sectors.—DNA

VCs remain
cautiously
optimistic as
Pak's digital
economy
develops

BEIJING: As Pakistan's digital economy steadily gains traction, the South Asian country is attracting increasing interest from regional venture capital firms seeking untapped growth opportunities beyond traditional investment hubs. With a population of over 240 million—one of the largest in the world—Pakistan presents a sizable consumer base and a young, tech-savvy demographic. Nearly two-thirds of the population is under the age of 30, a statistic often cited by investors as a key indicator of digital potential. "Pakistan is one of the most promising but underappreciated digital markets in Asia," said Thomas G. Tsao, Co-Founder and Chairperson of Gobi Partners, during an exclusive interview with China Economic Net. Tsao noted that Pakistan reminded him of China back in 2002, where a vast population and a surge in internet users laid the groundwork for rapid digital scaling.—APP

Turkish stock
exchange
opens week
on high note

ISTANBUL: Türkiye's benchmark stock index, the BIST 100, opened Monday at 9,457.25 points, up 0.26% or 24.71 points from the previous close. On Friday, the BIST 100 fell 0.61%, closing at 9,432.55 points with a daily transaction volume of 83.4 billion Turkish liras (\$2.17 billion). As of 9.55 am local time (0655 GMT), the US dollar/Turkish lira (USD/TRY) exchange rate stood at 38.4525, the EUR/TRY rate was 43.6530, and the GBP/TRY rate was 51.1645. The price of one ounce of gold was \$3,285.00, while the barrel price of Brent oil was around \$66.05.—APP

Iraq's counter-
terrorism chief
discusses security
with Egyptian,
Jordanian envoys

DUBAI: The head of Iraq's Counter-Terrorism Service, Lt. Gen. Karim Al-Tamimi, held separate meetings on Monday with the Egyptian and Jordanian military envoys to discuss ways to boost security cooperation. Al-Tamimi met with Egyptian military attaché Col. Akram Sharif and Jordanian military attaché Brig. Gen. Anwar Al-Bashasha, according to a statement from the Counter-Terrorism Service. The meetings focused on strengthening cooperation, exchanging expertise and sharing perspectives on security issues between the three countries.—APP

‘New
inferno was
unleashed’
with restart of
Gaza war

DOHA: A "new inferno" has been unleashed on Gaza following the restart of war in the Palestinian territory, the director general of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Monday "Gaza is experiencing and enduring... death, injury, multiple displacements, amputations, separation, disappearance, starvation and denial of aid and dignity on a massive scale, and just when the all important ceasefire led people to believe they had survived the worst, a new inferno was unleashed," Pierre Krahenbuhl told a Doha conference on security.—APP

Iran repelled
large
cyberattack
on Sunday

DUBAI: Iran repelled a large cyberattack on its infrastructure on Sunday, said the head of its Infrastructure Communications Company, a day after a powerful explosion damaged its most important container port and another round of talks with the US over Tehran's disputed nuclear program. "One of the most widespread and complex cyberattacks against the country's infrastructure was identified.—APP

Pervaiz, Arymbek for
boosting bilateral energy coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik held a productive meeting with the Vice Minister of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Arymbek Kudaibergen, today in Islamabad. The high-level discussion focused on enhancing bi-

lateral cooperation in the energy sector, including oil and gas exploration, minerals and investment opportunities. Both sides emphasized the importance of strengthening Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations, particularly in energy collaboration. Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik highlighted Pakistan's growing energy demands and expressed interest in

leveraging Kazakhstan's expertise in hydrocarbon resources and mining. The Vice Minister of Energy reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to expanding energy ties with Pakistan and explored avenues for joint ventures and technology exchange. Minister Malik stated, "Pakistan values its relationship with Kazakhstan

and sees immense potential for mutual growth in the energy sector. We look forward to deeper collaboration that benefits both nations." The Kazakh Vice Minister was briefed on the opportunities available in onshore and offshore exploration. He affirmed support for future partnerships and agreed on continued engagement between both the countries.

RCCI raises alarm
over economic
crisis caused by
road blockades

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has expressed grave concern over the ongoing road blockades in Sindh, arising from protests linked to the dispute over the proposed canals from the Indus River. In a statement, RCCI President Usman Shaukat highlighted that trucks carrying essential medicines, food supplies, and other critical goods are stranded, along with thousands of people – including patients, children, the elderly, men, and women. He warned that the situation is creating a dire humanitarian emergency, with patients urgently needing medicines and others facing severe shortages of food and water. "Traders are suffering losses worth millions of rupees, while the stranded individuals are enduring unimaginable hardships," said Usman Shaukat. "If aid is not provided immediately and the roads are not reopened, we risk facing a major human tragedy." RCCI further cautioned that the prolonged blockade has already caused shortages of medicines, fruits and other essential food items across the country and raised fears of an impending fuel crisis. Usman Shaukat urged the federal government to intervene immediately and take concrete steps to resolve the inter-provincial dispute before the situation escalates further. He emphasized that the people and traders of the twin cities – Rawalpindi and Islamabad are among those suffering the most due to the dispute between Sindh and Punjab. He noted that lifesaving drugs, essential medicines, and perishable goods such as fruits and vegetables are rotting in stranded trucks, posing the threat of major economic losses not only for Punjab but also for traders in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Kashmir.—DNA

Govt committed
for boosting agri-
exports: Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain on Monday reaffirmed the commitment of the government for supporting innovative efforts that boost exports, create jobs and strengthen the national economy. Addressing a ceremony held to celebrate Pakistan's first-ever export of Camel Milk Powder to China, the minister lauded the initiative, stating that this venture opens new avenues for country's dairy products in the international market. The exports of camel milk powder to China also demonstrates the untapped potential of the country's agricultural, livestock and dairy sectors to attain sustainable economic growth and social prosperity, he added. The ceremony was organized by ELC Biotechnology (Private) Limited to mark a significant achievement in Pakistan's growing agricultural and dairy export sectors. The export is being carried out in partnership with two prominent Chinese companies: The One HK Holding Ltd and Xi'an "TUO ZHONG TUO" Biotechnology Limited Company, said a press release. He emphasized that under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan's agriculture sector is being revitalized and will continue to expand, offering more opportunities for innovation, employment, and economic growth. "This achievement is not only a testament to our capabilities but also an inspiration for others to explore international collaboration in emerging sectors, he said adding that the Ministry of National Food Security and Research remains fully committed to supporting such innovative efforts that boost exports, create jobs and strengthen the national economy.—DNA

1st JC sets agenda for
enhancing Pak-Czech ties

ISLAMABAD: The first session of the Pakistan-Czech Republic Joint Commission (JC) on Economic Cooperation was held here Monday, under the framework of the Agreement on Economic Cooperation signed between the two governments in Prague on July 26, 2023. Both the countries signed important protocols during the JC session, the meeting of which was co-chaired by Special Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Muhammad Humair Karim and Director General responsible for the EU and Foreign Trade Section of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic, David Müller. High-level delegations from both countries, including officials and private sector representatives, participated in the Commission's deliberations. Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Humair Karim said that the Czech Republic's industrial strength and Pakistan's strategic location and emerging market offer significant complementarities. He stressed the need to increase bilateral trade, streamline trade procedures, reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers, and establish direct logistics channels. He also invited Czech businesses to invest in Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in sectors such as automotive, renewable energy, agricultural technology, information technology, and manufacturing. The delegates supported the organization of business forums and sector-specific exhibitions in Prague and Islamabad, and agreed to explore the formation of Joint Working Groups (JWGs) in the fields of Trade and Investment, Health and Pharmaceuticals, and Information Technology. Discussions on investment cooperation included the revival of efforts to negotiate a Bilateral Investment Agreement, with both sides committing to work towards concluding a modern treaty to support and protect two-way investments. Opportunities for joint ventures in industrial sectors such as surgical instruments, sports goods, leather, and footwear were highlighted, along with support for SMEs and innovation partnerships. The Commission also addressed energy cooperation, with the Czech Republic sharing its transition goals under the European Green Deal and Pakistan offering potential G2G opportunities through the Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL). Collaboration prospects were identified in renewables, efficiency technologies, and technical training. Interest was also expressed in developing R&D partnerships to tackle regional energy challenges. In the health sector, the Pakistani side proposed initiatives for regulatory collaboration, data sharing, capacity building, joint research, and the development of a digitalized cancer registry. In the area of education, Pakistan emphasized student and faculty exchanges, participation in Erasmus+ programs, and the alignment of TVET programs with labor market needs in both countries. On labor and manpower cooperation, Pakistan proposed the signing of a MoU on labor mobility and discussed strategies for skills recognition, pre-departure training, and worker welfare. The Czech side agreed to refer the proposal to relevant authorities and acknowledged the importance of safe and structured labor migration.—DNA

Sabah's "Home #itscomplicated"
launched at Pakistan embassy

ABU DHABI: The Embassy of Pakistan in Abu Dhabi hosted the launch of Sabah Karim Khan's book titled "Home #itscomplicated" which features a collection of essays by famous Pakistani writers, thinkers, doctors, filmmakers, journalists and achievers. Several literary personalities, diplomats and prominent members of Pakistani community participated in the

event. Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi was also in attendance. The panelists included Zain Saeed, Amber Zaffar Khan and Saba Karim Khan while Khuram Koraisy moderated the event. The book is a collection of essays by famous Pakistani writers, thinkers, doctors, filmmakers, journalists and achievers including Khalid Anam, Omar Shahid Hamid, Awaiz

Khan, Ali Khan, Muhammad Ali Bandal and others, and was edited by Sabah Karim Khan. The panel discussions highlighted various aspects of the book. The panelists underscored that varying Pakistani writers especially those living abroad have strong feelings and deep affection for Pakistan. The book expresses that Pakistan-home to over 240 million people, 70-80 languages

and fascinating natural diversity cannot be reduced to a breaking news ticker or news headline. Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi paid rich tribute to the panelists for their contributions in compiling a worth-reading book. He said that the book opens a window to the backstage, where one can discover stories of love, attachments and courage. He lauded the efforts of the Paki-

stani writers and motivated the community members to upsurge their attachment, affection and sense of belonging to Pakistan. The ambassador encouraged Pakistani writers and publishers to participate in various books exhibitions in the UAE including the ongoing Abu Dhabi Book Festival to promote soft image of Pakistan through art and literature.—DNA

Briefs

Conclave to elect new pope to begin on 7 May

VATICAN: Cardinals will meet next month in a secret conclave to elect the next pope, the Vatican has said. The closed-door meeting will start inside the Sistine Chapel on 7 May and will involve some 135 cardinals from across the world. It follows the death of Pope Francis who died at the age of 88 on Easter Monday and whose funeral was held on Saturday. There is no timescale as to how long it will take to elect the next pope, but the previous two conclaves, held in 2005 and 2013, lasted just two days.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said cardinals will take part in a solemn mass at St Peter's Basilica, after which those eligible to vote will gather in the Sistine Chapel for the secretive ballot. Once they enter the Sistine Chapel, cardinals must have no communication with the outside world until a new Pope is elected. There is only one round of voting on the first afternoon of the conclave, but the cardinals will vote up to four times every day afterwards. A new pope requires a two-thirds majority - and that can take time. Each cardinal casts his vote on a simple card that says, in Latin: "I elect as Supreme Pontiff" to which they add the name of their chosen candidate. - Agencies

Naqvi praises KPK police

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has commended the bravery and swift response of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Police for successfully thwarting a terrorist attack on the Baka Khel Police Station in Bannu.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Minister Naqvi lauded the professional skills and courage demonstrated by the police personnel during the encounter with Khwarji militants. He said that the officers, through their timely and decisive action, repelled the terrorist attack and protected the police station from potential devastation.

"The officers who foiled the nefarious designs of the terrorists are national heroes," the Interior Minister stated. He added, "We are immensely proud of the courage and commitment shown by the brave personnel of Baka Khel Police Station." Minister Naqvi also extended his congratulations to the entire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police force, emphasizing that their dedication and professionalism in the face of such threats deserve the highest appreciation. He assured that the federal government stands with the police and security forces in their mission to eliminate terrorism and safeguard the country.

Seven killed in blast near peace committee office

SHAMIM SHAHID

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: At least seven people were killed and several others injured in an explosion near the office of an aman (peace) committee in Wana area of KP South Waziristan district. According to Deputy Commissioner Nasir Khan, the blast occurred close to the peace committee's office, resulting in the deaths of seven individuals and injuries to 16 others. The injured were being shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital in Wana, he added. Meanwhile, the police officials said that the blast caused the complete destruction of the peace committee's office. Authorities have launched an investigation into the incident. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet. The country witnessed a sharp increase in terror attacks in January 2025, surging by 42% compared to the previous month, according to data released by PICSS, a think tank.

Pakistan must take steps for the hockey development: Bovelander



ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Dutch hockey legend Floris Jan Bovelander has urged Pakistan to take concrete and strategic steps to revive and develop its hockey sector, noting that the national team is currently absent from major international tournaments. He made these remarks while speaking to the media after observing a hockey training camp for young players at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium in Islamabad. The camp was organized by the Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy (KJHA) with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands and the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP). The event was also attended by Dutch Ambassador to Pakistan Henny Fokel de Vries, Federal Secretary for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Mohyuddin Wani, Director Sports HEC Javed Memon, and Olympian Khawaja Junaid. During his visit, Bovelander conducted specialized coaching clinics, working closely with players from KJHA and various clubs across Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The clinics focused on modern penalty corner techniques, game awareness, and advanced attacking strategies. Speaking to the media, Bovelander emphasized that Pakistan must invest in nurturing young talent and refining players' technical skills. He highlighted that the game of hockey has evolved significantly, becoming more technical and demanding, and that mastering modern techniques is essential for international success. Despite acknowledging his limited familiarity with the current state of hockey in Pakistan, he stressed that addressing existing gaps and upgrading player development are vital steps toward regaining past glory. Bovelander also expressed his delight at visiting Pakistan, calling it a wonderful experience. Federal Secretary for IPC Mohyuddin Wani, in his remarks, said that the government is committed to integrating education and sports, believing that collaboration between these two sectors will



yield better outcomes. He shared that initiatives are being introduced at the grassroots level to promote sports development, with special attention given to hockey. Olympian Khawaja Junaid, who also serves as the Prime Minister's Youth Program Focal Person for Sports, reiterated ongoing efforts for the revival of hockey in Pakistan. He appreciated the support extended by the PMYP and the Dutch Embassy, stressing that sports diplomacy is playing an important role in these initiatives. Junaid noted that Bovelander's visit would serve as a morale booster and have a positive impact on the efforts to uplift Pakistan hockey.

Putin announces three-day ceasefire from eighth May

The most recent one, over Easter, was very limited in scope and only resulted in a slight reduction in fighting, with both sides accusing each other of violating the truce

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has announced a temporary ceasefire for the war in Ukraine. The Kremlin said the ceasefire would run from the morning of 8 May until 11 May - which coincides with victory celebrations to mark the end of World War Two. In response, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha called for an immediate ceasefire lasting "at least 30 days". While US President Donald Trump, who has been attempting to broker a truce between the two sides, said he wants to see a permanent ceasefire, the White House said. The Kremlin announced a similar, 30-hour truce over Easter, but while both sides reported a dip in fighting, they accused each other of hundreds of violations. Ceasefires have been attempted more than 20 times in Ukraine - all of them failed eventually, and some within minutes of going into effect. The most recent one, over Easter, was very limited in scope and only resulted in a slight reduction in fighting, with both sides accusing each other of violating the truce. In a statement on Monday, the Kremlin said Putin declared

the ceasefire "based on humanitarian considerations". A translation of the statement said: "Russia believes that the Ukrainian side should follow this example. "In the event of violations of the ceasefire by the Ukrainian side, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation will give an adequate and effective response. "The Russian side once again declares its readiness for peace talks without preconditions, aimed at eliminating the root causes of the Ukrainian crisis, and constructive interaction with international partners." Following its release, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Sybiha said: "If Russia truly wants peace, it must cease fire immediately." "Why wait until May 8th?" he wrote on X. "If the fire can be ceased now and since any date for 30 days—so it is real, not just for a parade." He said Ukraine is ready to support a "lasting, durable, and full ceasefire. And this is what we are constantly proposing, for at least 30 days". White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Trump was growing "increasingly frustrated with leaders of both countries". "He wants to see a permanent ceasefire. "I understand Vladimir Putin this morning offered a temporary ceasefire. The president has made it clear he wants to see a permanent ceasefire first to stop the killing, stop the bloodshed."

Pakistan at turning point of economic recovery: Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb highlights economic turnaround, invites investors to join Pakistan's journey

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Aurangzeb, while speaking at Pakistan Conference 2025 at Harvard University, said that Pakistan had reached a pivotal moment of economic recovery and transformation. "After inheriting an economy facing significant challenges—from contracting GDP to depleting reserves—we have stabilized the fundamentals, restored confidence, and reignited growth," he said at the conference titled "Bridging Divides, Building Tomorrow: Pakistan's Path to Inclusive Growth and Governance." The Pakistan Conference is an annual flagship event that brings together policymakers, academics, business leaders, and students to discuss Pakistan's

economic, political, and social trajectory, according to a press release issued by finance ministry here Monday. Organized by Harvard students with support from university research centers, the event is the largest student-led conference on Pakistan in the United States. The conference serves as a vital forum to advance collaborative solutions, promote global engagement, and showcase the creativity and resilience of the Pakistani people. Aurangzeb highlighted key achievements including a historic reduction in inflation to 0.7%, the lowest in 60 years; foreign exchange reserves doubled; a 3% currency appreciation; and a current account surplus exceeding \$1 billion in March 2025. Pakistan also witnessed a 44% increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), a 24% rise in IT exports, and record-high remittances projected at \$38 billion. For the first time in 24 years, Pakistan achieved a fiscal surplus, with the highest primary fiscal surplus in two decades. Fitch has upgraded Pakistan's credit sovereign credit rating to B- with a stable outlook. - DNA

Israel using Gaza aid as 'weapon of war': Palestinian envoy to ICJ

Hijazi said Israel has not allowed any humanitarian supplies or fuel into Gaza and the Israeli Supreme Court has supported the blockade by rejecting multiple petitions for aid, leading to a man-made humanitarian catastrophe, including deaths by starvation

NEWS DESK

THE HAGUE: A Palestinian envoy has told the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that Israel has used humanitarian aid as a "weapon of war" as Gaza faces humanitarian catastrophe due to months-long Israeli blockade. "These are the facts. Starvation is here. Humanitarian aid is being used as a weapon of war," Palestinian Ambassador to the Netherlands Ammar Hijazi said on Monday in The Hague. "Israel is starving, killing and displacing Palestinians while also targeting and blocking humanitarian organizations trying to save their lives," he added. The Palestinian envoy made the remarks as the ICJ opened hearings, based on a 2024 request from the UN General Assembly, to gauge Israel's responsibilities for the humanitarian crisis gripping Gaza. Hijazi said Israel has not allowed any humanitarian supplies or fuel into Gaza and the Israeli Supreme Court has supported the blockade by rejecting multiple petitions for aid, leading to a man-made humanitarian catastrophe, including deaths by starvation. Irish lawyer Blinne Ni Ghraigh, the Palestine representative at the ICJ said, "Israel's actions are not only inhumane but genocidal, as concluded by the UN Commission of Inquiry and broadly agreed upon by the human rights community." "Israel continues to block UN-mandated investigatory bodies from Gaza while destroying and burying evidence of

its crimes." The hearings, which will run throughout the week, will see 38 countries, including the United States, China, France, Russia and Saudi Arabia, addressing the 15-judge panel to consider the compliance of Israel's actions with international law. The League of Arab States, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and African Union will also present their arguments about Israel's obligations to ensure aid delivery into Gaza. The ICJ, aka World Court, has been tasked by the UN with providing an advisory opinion "on a priority basis and with the utmost urgency". While the ruling is nonbinding, it will mount pressure on Israel as a growing list of international courts has ruled against its actions. Israel launched the war of genocide in Gaza and imposed a complete siege on the strip on October 7, 2023, after Hamas carried out Operation Al-Aqsa Flood in retaliation for Israel's intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people. Last January, the Israeli regime was forced to agree to a ceasefire deal with Hamas given the regime's failure to achieve any of its objectives, including the "elimination" of the Palestinian resistance movement or the release of captives. However, Israel cut off food and medical supplies and other aid to the 2.3 million residents of the Gaza Strip on March 2, just two weeks before breaking the two-month ceasefire and prisoner-captive exchange agreement. In total, 52,314 Palestinians have been killed and 117,792 others injured since October 7, 2023, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

IHC issues notice to immigration Director General

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued a show-cause notice to the Director General of Immigration and Passports and a NAB director for contempt of court over violating judicial orders. Acting Chief Justice Sarfraz Dogar lost his cool when another order was passed despite Justice Babar Sattar's previous order being suspended. Heading a division bench, Justice Dogar remarked that today's order by Justice Babar Sattar would also be suspended. The bench was hearing an intra-court appeal filed by the DG Immigration and Passports against Justice Babar Sattar's earlier decision.

Government committed to protect workers' rights

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said the government of Pakistan remained committed to strengthening frameworks that protect workers' rights and safety. In a message on the occasion of World Day for Safety and Health at Work observed on April 28, he said, "Today, as we mark the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, Pakistan joins the international community in reaffirming our commitment to the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases, and to promoting the well-being of every worker across all sectors."

Massive blackout hits Spain, Portugal, France

MADRID: A massive blackout hit Spain, Portugal and part of southern France on Monday, grid operators said, leaving millions of people affected. The cause for the outage was not immediately reported. Spain's railway operator Adif said that the power cut halted trains across the entire country, while airports operator Aena said "several incidents" occurred in Spanish airports. - Agencies



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