



Islamabad POST

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Canada should 'never forget' US betrayal; old relations 'over'

Detailed News On Page-08

Raja discharged from multiple NAB references

Detailed News On Page-08



Haris shares his views on single-ball proposal

Detailed News On Page-06



Refutes baseless allegations

India sponsoring terrorism inside Pakistan: DG ISPR

India operating terror network inside Pakistan, providing IEDs, explosives, and funds to militants: DG ISPR

ANSAR M BHATTI

RAWALPINDI: Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry during press conference in Rawalpindi presented "irrefutable" evidence of Indian-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan, saying Indian army officers orchestrating cross-border terrorism within Pakistan and supplying explosives to target civilians and security forces. Addressing a press conference, Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said India had failed to provide "a shred of evidence" to support its allegations against Pakistan regarding the recent Pahalgam attack. "Seven days have passed since the Pahalgam incident, and so far, India has not presented any evidence for its baseless allegations," Chaudhry said. He claimed India was operating a terror network inside Pakistan, providing improvised explosive devices (IEDs), explosives, and funds to militants. "This irrefutable evidence is just one small part of India's state-sponsored terrorism," the DG ISPR said. DG ISPR detailed the arrest of a Pakistani citizen allegedly trained and sponsored by India. He said the suspect was apprehended near the Jhelum bus stand on April 25 and found in possession of an IED, two mobile phones, and Rs70,000. Subsequent searches recovered an Indian-origin drone and Rs1 million in cash from the suspect's residence. "Forensic analysis of the retrieved materials confirmed irrefutable evidence, verifiable by any credible independent agency," Chaudhry said. The army's spokesperson identified the handler as Subedar Sukvinder, a junior commissioned officer of the Indian army. He further alleged that other Indian army personnel involved included Major Sandeep Verma, Subedar Sukvinder, Havildar Amit, and another soldier. "These individuals are directly involved in sponsoring terrorism

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Dar apprises UAE, Kuwaiti FM's of NSC decisions

Both leaders committed to maintaining close coordination

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar on Tuesday held telephonic conversation with his counterpart in the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan wherein they discussed the recent regional situation and matters of mutual concern. Dar apprised the UAE deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Pakistan's National Security Committee's decisions in response to India's unfounded allegations, inflammatory rhetoric, and unilateral actions, said foreign ministry in a press release. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan emphasized the importance of upholding regional stability, promoting dialogue, exercising restraint, and peaceful resolution of disputes. Reaffirming the strong fraternal ties between Pakistan and the UAE, both leaders committed to maintaining close coordination and consultations in light of evolving regional situation. Both sides expressed their resolve to enhancing bilateral cooperation and advancing shared objectives of peace,

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ISLAMABAD: Minister for Transport of Kazakhstan, Marat Karabayev calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

Indian media misbehaves with Pakistan diplomats

The unpleasant episode occurred when Pakistani High Commission staff were returning from India

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Tension runs high at the Attari Border as Indian media allegedly crossed the line and misbehaved with Pakistani diplomats returning home. The unpleasant incident took place in the presence of Indian army and police. According to sources, the situation was created when Pakistani diplomats reached the Attari Border. As soon as they arrived, their passports were taken away, sparking a heated exchange. The Indian journalists, instead of showing courtesy, picked a fight with the Pakistani officials and hurled

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Revolutionizing IT sector

PM Shehbaz hails \$700m pledges in foreign investment

Our youth, aged between 15 and 30, constitute 60% of the population

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday hailed around \$700 million pledges in new foreign investment in the Information Technology (IT) sector and called on international stakeholders to continue supporting Pakistan's journey as it was ready to lead global digital economy. The prime minister addressed the Digital Foreign Direct Investment (DFDI-2025) Conference on Tuesday, declaring that Pakistan is "not waiting for the future, but shaping it." The conference, attended by global tech leaders, investors, and innovation champions, marked a significant step in Pakistan's emergence as a key player in the global digital economy. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in his inaugural keynote address, shared insights from his four decades in public service, observing the "sea change in global dynamics driven

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Govt won't approve any anti-Sindh project, CM Sindh

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh's Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said that his government will not approve any anti-Sindh project. Addressing to People's Party workers at Karachi airport chief minister Shah said that no canal can be built without mutual agreement of the provinces. "Chairman PPP didn't step back over the issue". "President Zardari was ailing still he asked about the matter," chief minister said. Murad Ali Shah was speaking in the context of the contentious canal project on the Indus River, widely opposed by the people of

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

President, PM greet Canadian PM Mark

Says, we are proud of the vibrant Pakistani diaspora in Canada

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif extended warm felicitations to the Prime Minister of Canada on his party's victory in the federal elections. He stated that Pakistan and Canada enjoy excellent bilateral relations and expressed hope that ties between the two countries would continue to further strengthen under the leadership of Prime Minister Mark Carney. In a post on social media platform X, he also congratulated the Liberal Party of its success in the recently held elections.

Pak shoots down Indian quadcopter

Enemy attempted to conduct surveillance using a quadcopter

IKRAM ULLAH JOYIA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Army on Tuesday shot down an Indian quadcopter drone near the Line of Control (LoC) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), state media reported, as tensions between the two countries linger on in the wake of the Pahalgam attack. The April 22 attack killed 26 men, mostly tourists, and was one of the deadliest armed attacks in the disputed Himalayan region since 2000. Kashmir Resistance, also known as The Resistance Front, said it "unequivocally" denied involvement in the attack, after an initial message that claimed responsibility. India, without offering any evidence, has implied cross-border linkages of the attackers, while Pakistan has strongly denied any involvement.

Eyes World Bank, ICJ

Pak preparing to challenge suspension of water treaty

He told that government was working on plans for at least three different legal options

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is preparing international legal action over India's suspension of a key river water-sharing treaty, a government minister told Reuters, as tensions intensify between the neighbours following an attack on tourists in India-administered Kashmir. Aqeel Malik, the Minister of State for Law and Justice, told Reuters late on Monday that Islamabad was working on plans for at least three different legal options, including raising the issue at the World Bank - the treaty's facilitator. It was also considering taking action at the Permanent Court of Arbitration or at the International Court of Justice in the Hague where it could allege that India has violated the 1960 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, he said. "Legal strategy consultations are almost complete," Malik said, adding the decision on which cases to pursue would be made "soon" and would likely include pursuing more than one avenue. India's water resources officials did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment.

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Pakistan tells UN 'Regional adversaries' sponsored Jaffar Express attack

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The Pakistan Mission to the United Nations on Tuesday said the country had "credible evidence" proving that the Jaffar Express attack was "externally sponsored by its regional adversaries", according to a press release. The Jaffar Express train was hijacked on March 11 when Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) terrorists ambushed the Peshawar-bound train carrying 440 passengers, opening fire and taking hostages.

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No change in POL prices anticipated

Officials attribute stability to subdued global oil prices, with Brent crude holding at \$65.52 per barrel

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum product prices are expected to remain unchanged for the next fortnight starting May 1, according to industrial and official estimates. Sources told that petrol may decrease slightly by Re0.016 per litre, while high-speed diesel could see a marginal uptick of just Re0.01 per litre - changes so minimal they are unlikely to be passed on to consumers. Officials attributed the stability to subdued global oil prices,

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IMF to decide on bailout tranche at May 9 meeting

If approved by Executive Board, Pakistan will have access to \$1 billion under the EFF

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON/ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Executive Board is scheduled to meet on May 9 to discuss the \$1.3 billion staff-level agreement with Pakistan under its ongoing 37-month bailout programme. The meeting, as per the statement issued by the IMF, will cater to Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility (EFF), request for the modification of performance criteria, and request for an arrangement under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). The Washington-based lender and Islamabad reached an SLA and agreed on the first review of the \$7 loan facility in March. The SLA, a 28-month deal, would support Pakistan's efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, the IMF had said back then. If approved by the IMF's Executive Board, Pakistan will have access to approximately \$1 billion under the EFF, bringing total disbursements under the programme to around \$2 billion. Ahead of the upcoming meeting, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb recently met IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva

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PSX claws back from steep early slide

DNA

KARACHI: Stocks clawed back heavy early losses on Tuesday, lifted by optimism that an upcoming IMF board meeting will likely approve a loan for Pakistan, as investors seemingly brushed off Pakistan-India tensions for now. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 index surged by 808 points, or 0.71%, to settle at 114,872.18 amid sustained investor interest and higher volumes. The market rallied throughout the session, hitting an intraday high of 115,040.58, just shy of its record levels, while the day's low stood at 112,935.56. Volumes also swelled, with over 185 million shares traded, generating a total value of Rs22.38 billion.

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Governor KP hails lawyers' role in national uplift

Governor Kundi reiterated that the party continues to voice its concerns and struggles for provincial rights at the federal level. Despite having only four MPs in the provincial assembly, he highlighted that the PPP leadership ensured significant representation for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the federal government

DNA

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday praised the legal community for its pivotal role in the progress, prosperity, and stability of Pakistan, calling their contributions to the rule of law "unforgettable." He was speaking at a reception held at the Governor House in honor of the newly elected office bearers from the Peoples Lawyers Forum (PLF) who secured victories in various district and tehsil bar council elections in the province. The event was attended by PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, Provincial Deputy General Secretary Abrar Saeed Swati, PLF Provincial President Advocate Gohar Rehman, and PLF General Secretary Advocate Lajbar Khan Khalil. Governor Kundi

reiterated that the party continues to voice its concerns and struggles for provincial rights at the federal level. Despite having only four MPs in the provincial assembly, he highlighted that the PPP leadership ensured significant representation for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the federal government. "If the party increases its efforts and wins more seats, we will secure even greater rights for the province," he said, promising an upcoming meeting between the lawyers and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. He assured that the Governor House is open to PLF lawyers and committed to working with the federal Ministry of Law to secure grants for legal professionals. He invited suggestions from the legal community and emphasized the importance of unity, introspection, and proactive planning for better outcomes in High Court and Provincial Bar Council

elections. PPP KP President Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha also addressed the gathering, expressing gratitude to the Governor for organizing the reception and commending PLF for successfully challenging the provincial government, especially in regions like Malakand and Dera Ismail Khan. He emphasized the need for strategic planning and learning from past shortcomings to continue winning future elections under the vision of Shaheed Bhutto. Several bar representatives also spoke at the event, including KP Bar Council member Hashmat Nawaz Sadozai, Vice President of Dera High Court Bar Shah Fahad Ansari, and representatives from Mardan, Upper Chitral, Bannu, Swat, Kohat, Malakand, and others. They shared their suggestions and concerns regarding federal departments and thanked the Governor and PPP leadership for their support.



ISLAMABAD: A special prayer ceremony organized for the soul of the Pope France Khatun Fatima Church F 8/4 in the federal capital.

Ministry approves temporary lodging

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Housing and Works has notified the Allotment of Temporary Accommodation in the Federal Lodges and Hostel Rules, 2025. These rules aimed to regulate the allotment of accommodation and ensure smooth functioning within the federal lodges and hostels while maintaining order and accountability. Under these rules all lodges and hostels specified in the schedule will be managed by the relevant administrative division and the initial allotment period is set at 3 years, with the possibility of extension on a yearly basis for a maximum of 2 additional years, depending on the reasons provided. This applies to both bachelor and single rooms.—APP

Dengue larvae detected in city park

BAHAWALPUR: Special teams of health department Punjab detected dengue larvae in a park here on Tuesday. Official sources from health department said that special teams were constituted to collect water samples from different parts of Bahawalpur city to analysis, which detected dengue larvae from a water sample collected from Ladies Park of Saraii Chowk. They said that water samples were collected from around all parks located in the city where clean water was supplied to plants and greenery. The health department had sent a report to the Commissioner Bahawalpur division in this regard.—APP

NAB distributes Rs 300m among housing scheme affectees

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) distributed cheques worth Rs 300 million to over 500 affectees of four housing schemes in Rawalpindi and Islamabad during a ceremony held at its headquarters on Tuesday. The ceremony, presided over by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Lieutenant General (R) Nazir Ahmed, featured the distribution of compensation cheques to victims of four fraudulent housing schemes: Al-Haram City, Ghauri Town, Gulshan-e-Rahman, and Arain City. It is pertinent to mention that in the first phase, billions of rupees recovered by NAB's efforts had already been distributed

among the affectees of these housing schemes, and today, in the second phase, further checks were distributed among the affectees. The ceremony was also attended by Deputy Chairman Sohail Nasir, Prosecutor General NAB Syed Ehtisham Qadir Shah, Director General NAB Rawalpindi Region Wagar Ahmed Chohan, and other senior officers. Addressing the gathering, NAB Chairman Lieutenant General (R) Nazir Ahmed emphasized that recovering and promptly returning citizens' money lost to fraudulent housing schemes and investment scams remains the Bureau's highest priority. He emphasized that the strict legal

action is being taken against those elements involved in such corrupt practices. He urged citizens to invest their hard-earned money in any project only after thorough investigation and satisfaction to avoid financial losses. Chairman NAB stressed that the general public should be wary of those who deceive false promises. Chairman Nazir Ahmed cautioned prospective buyers to thoroughly verify critical aspects before committing to any housing scheme. He stressed the importance of confirming proper land ownership, No objection certificate (NOC), valid regulatory approvals, compliant architectural plans.—APP

PA Speaker honours Palestinian graduates

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan attended the graduation ceremony of Palestinian students at the University of Lahore as the chief guest here on Tuesday. The event marked a significant milestone for 27 Palestinian students who completed their Bachelor of Dentistry degrees. Addressing the ceremony, the speaker commended the graduates for their perseverance and resilience and paid tribute to their courage and academic excellence. "This achievement reflects not just your dedication but also the enduring bond of brotherhood between Pakistan and Palestine," he said. The speaker said that the education of Palestinian students in Pakistan exemplifies the humanitarian val-

ues upheld by the Pakistani nation. Lauding the federal government's decision to provide free education to students arriving from Gaza, Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for setting a commendable precedent of international solidarity. Addressing the harrowing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the speaker delivered an emotionally charged statement: "I have no words to describe the ongoing oppression in Gaza. The world turns a blind eye as hospitals are destroyed and children suffer. History will bear witness to this silence." Drawing a poignant parallel with the tragedy of Karbala, he added, "Just as innocent children were martyred in Karbala, the same is happening in Gaza today." He also

urged the Health Minister to ensure house jobs and essential professional facilities for the graduating Palestinian doctors, recognizing their potential and commitment. In a symbolic gesture, he announced that the graduates would be formally invited to attend a session of the Punjab Assembly in honour of their accomplishments. Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan reiterated Pakistan's commitment to advocating for the Palestinian cause at all international platforms and called for the enforcement of United Nations resolutions. "If the lives of global citizens matter, then so do the lives of Palestinians," he added. He also highlighted the parallels between the suffering in Gaza and the ongoing human rights violations.—APP

Bibi Pakdaman Urs to begin from May 1

MULTAN: The annual Urs of Bibi Pakdaman (Bibi Raasti), the revered mother of Hazrat Shah Rukn-e-Alam (RA), will commence on May 1. The event will witness participation from devotees, political and social figures, as well as prominent religious scholars. Bibi Pakdaman holds a significant place in Sufi tradition as the mother of the great Sufi saint Shah Rukn-e-Alam (RA), whose shrine is a spiritual landmark in Multan. The Urs is expected to draw large gatherings for homage.—APP

Life term awarded to three accused in drug case

FAISALABAD, Apr 29 (APP): Special Court for Control of Narcotic Substances Judge Muhammad Iqbal Haral awarded life imprisonment to three accused involved in a narcotics case of Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) police station. According to the prosecution, an ANF team, on a tip-off, conducted raid near Sahianwala Interchange on December 23, 2022 and had arrested three drug traffickers including Yar Hassan Pathan of Kohat with 24 kilogram charas, Sultan Hussain Pathan of Kohat with 120 kg charas and Nadeem Ullah Pathan of Karak with 24 kg charas. After observing evidence and witnesses, the court found all three accused guilty and awarded them life imprisonment each under section 9(1)(3)(e) of Control of Narcotics Substance Act (CNSA) 1997. The learned judge also imposed a fine of Rs.1.5 million on Sultan Hussain and a fine of Rs.800,000 each on Yar Hassan and Nadeem Ullah. The convict Sultan Hussain will have to undergo an additional imprisonment of two years while Yar Hassan and Nadeem Ullah will face additional imprisonment of one year each if they failed to pay the fine.—APP

Pakistan becoming global tech investment hub

The minister said that IT exports have witnessed a 25% increase over the past nine months, reflecting the success of the government's prudent policies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, said on Tuesday that Pakistan is quickly becoming a global center for technology and innovation. Addressing first Digital Foreign Direct Investment (DFDI-2025) Forum, she said the country offers a clear, business-friendly path for investors interested in its growing IT sector. She highlighted that the government has established Special Technology Zones across Pakistan, which offer attractive incentives for both local and international investors. "These zones provide special benefits to anyone willing to invest in Pakistan's tech industry," she said. The minister shared that the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) has set up 25 software technology parks across the country. These parks offer subsidised office

space and internet services to promote business growth. She also mentioned that the Ignite R&D Fund has supported over 1,900 startups, helping to increase venture capital investments in Pakistan. The minister said that IT exports have witnessed a 25% increase over the past nine months, reflecting the success of the government's prudent policies. She added that Pakistan is focusing on promoting cashless transactions, which will help usher in an economic revolution. She said that 25,200 kilometers of fiber optic cable were installed across 800 villages, connecting over one million people to high-speed internet through the Universal Service Fund. She further announced that Pakistan is preparing for one of its biggest spectrum auctions, where more than 500 megahertz of spectrum will be made available for expanding 4G and 5G services. Speaking about youth development, she said laptops have been distributed based on merit

to give young people better digital access and skills. She added that Pakistan is boosting its IT exports by improving the ecosystem through skilled professionals, better digital infrastructure, and simplified business processes. "Last year, Pakistan was named the most cost-effective and competitive country for IT services in the world," she said. "With confidence, we can now say that investors have a clear path forward in Pakistan," she said. She credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership for helping position Pakistan as a future global tech destination. Fernando Morillo representing Mashreq Bank announced that the bank had received approval from the State Bank of Pakistan to begin pilot operations. He said Mashreq has already invested \$34 million in its digital banking operations in Pakistan since 2023 and plans to invest another \$30 million in 2025, bringing their total to \$100 million.

Sri Lankan delegation visits MOFA



DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation

of senior officers, attending National Defence College, Sri Lanka, visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad

on Tuesday. Director General South Asia Ilyas Mehmood Nizami briefed the delegation on the functioning of the

Ministry, important facets of Pakistan's foreign policy and different dimensions of Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations.

Haripur Wildlife Division faces manpower shortage, operational crisis

HARIPUR: The Haripur Wildlife Division, considered the most critical unit in the Hazara region, is currently grappling with severe staff shortages and operational inefficiencies. Despite being upgraded from a sub-division to a full-fledged division in April 2021, the department continues to face systemic neglect. The division has jurisdiction over five game reserves, two waterfall habitats, the renowned Bher area known for goral, and the Makhniyal Protected Area, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. However, after its upgrade, the department lost a deputy ranger and two watchers one due to retirement and another who resigned. Currently, the division is functioning with only one Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), one Sub-Divisional Forest Officer (SDFO), one depu-

ty ranger, one head watcher, and seven watchers. Among these, one watcher is posted in Khanpur Tehsil and another in Ghazi Tehsil. Shockingly, seven sanctioned watcher positions have remained vacant for an extended period, leaving the department under immense strain. In a further blow to operational capacity, the division lacks even a security guard. Two official vehicles are out of service, and there is currently no transport available for patrolling or field inspections, severely hampering wildlife protection efforts. Nature enthusiasts and environmental advocates have expressed concern, pointing out that Haripur hosts the highest number of hunting grounds in Hazara and attracts bird hunters year-round. Unlike other districts in the region, Haripur remains a hotspot for wildlife-relat-

ed activity, underscoring the division's strategic importance. Calls are growing louder for provincial leadership to intervene. Citizens and stakeholders have urged Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Special Assistant for Forests and Wildlife Pir Musawir Khan, and Secretary for Forests and Wildlife Shahid Zaman to prioritize the department's needs and provide essential facilities to enable staff to perform their duties effectively. Talking to APP, Conservator Wildlife Hazara Iftikhar uz Zaman revealed that the division requires at least 25 staff members, including deputy rangers, watchers, and head watchers. A request for hiring has been submitted to the Finance Department through a Summary of New Expenditures (SNE), but it has been repeatedly dropped over the past two to three years due to

financial limitations.

At present, the division has only six staff members out of a sanctioned strength of ten. Recruitment of five additional employees has been stalled due to a pending court case. Iftikhar also pointed out that the lack of vehicles and budget makes field mobility extremely difficult. In comparison, the Haripur Forest Department has six vehicles, while the Wildlife Department has none. Efforts are underway to rectify the situation. A new project proposal has been submitted to the relevant authorities, aiming to equip the division with dedicated office buildings, vehicles, and motorcycles to enhance its operational capabilities. The proposed cost of the project exceeds PKR 100 million, but the final allocation will be determined after approval from the Finance Department.—DNA

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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
Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
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Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9225596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
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Hospitals
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MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



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CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank
Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Md. Iqbal for enhanced Pak-Bangla bilateral ties

Zafar Bakhtawari expressed concern over the rapidly deteriorating situation between Pakistan and India, and said that all regional countries must play an effective role in ensuring peace and stability in the region

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Bangladesh's High Commissioner, Md. Iqbal Hussain Khan, has said that after 50 years, Bangladesh is moving forward warmly to re-establish its longstanding relations with Pakistan. "We want to further enhance bilateral cooperation not only in trade and investment but also in the fields of culture, sports, and tourism," he said. "We hope that Fly Jinnah and AirSial will start flights from Pakistan to Bangladesh, and likewise, Bangladesh's national carrier, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, should also resume its flights to Pakistan. Bangladeshi visas are issued very easily to Pakistani citizens through an online process." He expressed these views during a meeting at the Bangladesh High Commission with Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of United Business Group (UBG), former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Bakhtawari, and former President of Chakwal Chamber of Commerce and Industry Waqar Bakhtawari. During the meeting, Zafar



Bakhtawari expressed concern over the rapidly deteriorating situation between Pakistan and India, and said that all regional countries must play an effective role in ensuring peace and stability in the region. Ahsan Bakhtawari stated that

there are vast opportunities for bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh in the pharmaceutical sector. He emphasized that the people of both countries can be brought closer through cricket diplomacy. He suggested that some matches

of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) should be held in Bangladesh and some matches of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) should be held in Pakistan. Former Chakwal Chamber President Waqar Bakhtawari noted that roads in Islamabad

named after Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, A.K. Fazlul Huq, and Khawaja Nazimuddin are fine examples of Pak-Bangladesh friendship. He suggested that Pakistan should learn from Bangladesh's model to control population growth.

SAFRON performance, local bodies devolution in AJK reviewed

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON on Tuesday reviewed the performance of the States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), assessed budgetary allocations for AJK's local governments, and discussed the devolution plan for local bodies. Chaired by MNA Haji Imtiaz Ahmed Choudhry, the committee met in Parliament House on Tuesday. Officials from the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON briefed the committee on key initiatives, administrative performance, development progress, local bodies' devolution plan and budgetary allocations in AJK, and Afghan refugees management. The committee acknowledged the successful conduct of local bodies elections—held after a gap of 31 years—in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), terming it a landmark development in the advancement of grassroots democracy and citizen participation in local governance.—APP

Sanaullah, Yerzhan meet to strengthen bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah Khan met with Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Tourism and Sports, Yerzhan Yerkinbayev, and President of CCI, Kanat Alin. During the meeting, both sides discussed ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the fields of sports and tourism, said a press release. Sanaullah, who also holds the portfolio of Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) emphasized the longstanding fraternal relations between Pakistan and Kazakhstan and expressed the desire to further enhance them through practical collaboration. He announced that Pakistan will provide technical support to Kazakhstan in the fields of hockey, squash, and snooker. He also highlighted the importance of encouraging women's participation in sports and discussed the possibility of joint initiatives to promote gender inclusion. Sanaullah said that sports exchange programs between the two countries will play a vital role in engaging youth in healthy and constructive activities.—APP

Yousaf , Nawaf see off first Hajj flight

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, alongside Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki arrived at Islamabad International Airport early Tuesday morning to review the immigration process for Pakistani pilgrims departing under the 'Road to Makkah' project. Minister Yousaf was briefed on the streamlined immigration procedures carried out at the airport, as part of the Saudi initiative to facilitate pilgrims by completing immigration formalities within their home countries. Addressing the departing pilgrims, the minister called it a moment of pride and honor to be present at their departure for the sacred journey. "Today, by the grace of Almighty Allah, we are bidding farewell to His guests as they set off to the holy land to perform Hajj," he said. He emphasized the importance of representing Pakistan with dignity, urging pilgrims to respect Saudi laws and cultural norms. "You are not just guests of Allah but also ambassadors of Pakistan in the Kingdom," he stated. Highlighting his personal commitment to the Hajj operation, the minister announced that he would soon travel to Saudi Arabia to personally inspect arrangements and address any issues faced by Pakistani pilgrims. "I will remain among our pilgrims, ensuring they receive all necessary facilities. Every effort will be made to resolve their problems," he affirmed. Rejecting special privileges offered by the Saudi authorities, Sardar Yousaf said he declined VIP Hajj arrangements to stay closer to the people. "Despite limited resources, we have strived to provide maximum facilities to the pilgrims this year," he noted. The minister also shared that this year's Hajj arrangements are significantly improved compared to previous years and assured that the difference will be evident to the pilgrims. "I will personally supervise the Hajj operations and direct relevant officials to promptly address any complaints," he said. To aid pilgrims during their journey, especially in Mina, each pilgrim is being provided with a SIM card loaded with a mobile application designed to help them navigate and seek assistance if lost. He urged pilgrims to pray for the safety and security of Pakistan while in the holy land. "Your prayers can open many doors. Alongside your personal supplications, remember to pray for peace, prosperity, and unity in Pakistan and the wider Muslim world," he said. According to Minister Yousaf, over 50,000 Pakistani pilgrims from Islamabad and Karachi will benefit from the 'Road to Makkah' project this year. The initiative allows pre-departure immigration processing in Pakistan, reducing waiting times upon arrival in Saudi Arabia. He expressed hope that the facility would be expanded to other cities across Pakistan in the coming years. The minister concluded by expressing gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for their continued support and excellent arrangements for Hajj pilgrims.—DNA

AIOU awards scholarships to 251 students

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has organized a prestigious ceremony to honour students who were awarded Final Year Project Grants and Merit Scholarships. Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor AIOU graced the event as chief guest. Addressing the gathering, Dr.

Nasir Mahmood emphasized the urgent need to focus on the quality of education. He expressed pride in the university's recent international recognition, stating, "It is a moment of great satisfaction that Allama Iqbal Open University has secured the top position under Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Qual-

ity Education) in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024 – a testament to our global educational impact." He highlighted the university's commitment to supporting students by offering merit scholarships to talented and hardworking individuals, while also providing special fee concessions

to those facing financial challenges. "A researcher must always adhere to the fundamental principles of research and international standards to ensure their work is comprehensive, effective, and impactful," he added. The event was organized by the Directorate of Student Advisory and Counseling Services. A total of 239 students were awarded merit scholarships, and 12 students received final year project grants. Congratulating the scholarship recipients, the Vice Chancellor noted that these scholarships are not only a means of recognizing talent but also aim to support deserving students in completing their education.—DNA

China's space station to soon receive Pakistani astronaut

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan space cooperation is going to be high gear as China's Tiangong space station that has welcomed Shenzhou 20, Chinese spaceflight which flew on April 24, will soon receive Pakistani astronaut under framework of China-Pakistan Space Cooperation first time in the history of China and Pakistan all-weather friendship. Shenzhou 20, Chinese spaceflight blasted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China and landed on Tiangong Space Station. In the backdrop of Shenzhou 20, Tiangong Space station and China Space Program, Sino-Pak tenacious relationship has tugged the new string of space collaboration and friendliness, Gwa-

dar Pro reported on Tuesday. China's manned space program, that facilitated three-crewed Shenzhou 20, follows principles of peaceful use, mutual benefit, and shared development. The China-Pakistan Space collaboration sets a model for broader international cooperation, encouraging more nations to participate. Let alone world is abuzz on successful flight of Shenzhou 20, Pakistan nation has also gone overboard with conviviality and excitement observing all development phases, take-off and Shenzhou-20's land on Tiangong space station. Shenzhou-20 crewed mission has transported three Chinese astronauts Chen Dong, Chen Zhongrui and Wang Jie. Cheng Dong serves as the commander, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA). They will replace three astronauts currently on

the Chinese space station. Like those before them, they will stay there for roughly six months. Last three-person crew were sent in October last year and have been in Tiangong Space Station for 175 days. The inclusion of a Pakistani astronaut in an international mission unveils an awesome milestone for Pakistan's space ambitions. In 2026, under Pakistan China Space Cooperation, Pakistani astronaut will go full steam ahead to join a future mission to China's Tiangong space station. Development has come after the signing of a landmark agreement between the two countries at the end of February this year. Selection process for Pakistani astronauts is currently underway. The selection will follow the same rigorous process as that of Chinese astronauts, comprising three stages – preliminary,

secondary and final. While the preliminary selection is being carried out in Pakistan, the subsequent stages will be held in China. Two candidates will ultimately be short-listed to undergo training at Chinese facilities. One Pakistani astronaut will take part in a joint spaceflight mission as a payload specialist. Aside from routine crew responsibilities, the astronaut will also conduct scientific experiments on behalf of Pakistan. The inclusion of a Pakistani astronaut in an international mission unveils an awesome milestone for Pakistan's space ambitions seeking to deepen its scientific and technological cooperation with China. The signing of this agreement marks the first time that the Chinese government will select and train astronauts for foreign countries.

CDA, NUST sign MoU for transparent, merit-based recruitment

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to ensure merit-based, transparent, and computerised recruitment for CDA vacancies. The agreement aims to address workforce shortages by hiring qualified, skilled, and IT-proficient professionals through a modern, automated testing system. CDA, NUST sign MoU for transparent, merit-based recruitment The signing ceremony took place during a high-level meeting chaired by CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa at the CDA headquarters on Tuesday. Attendees included CDA members, NUST representatives, and senior officials. Under the MoU, NUST will conduct fully computerised written tests and oversee the recruitment process to ensure fairness and efficiency. The system will screen applications, administer exams, and evaluate candidates using advanced technology, eliminating human bias. Chairman Randhawa emphasised that the initiative prioritises quality, transparency, and merit over mere hiring targets. "CDA seeks educated, skilled, and hardworking individuals. These tests aren't just about recruitment—they're about maintaining high standards," he stated. He added that the partnership with NUST, known for its rigorous merit-based systems, aligns with CDA's goal of modernising its workforce. Randhawa highlighted the need for an effective monitoring system to enhance institutional performance. "Collaborating with NUST is a milestone in ensuring CDA recruits talent that meets contemporary demands," he said. The chairman reiterated CDA's commitment to providing equal opportunities for youth equipped with modern IT skills.—DNA

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A health screening is an essential part of preventive healthcare and plays a vital role in maintaining overall well-being. Early detection of certain medical conditions helps to manage them more easily. Health screenings can identify symptoms or warning signs of potential illnesses before they become serious and can help to ensure that individuals receive the necessary medical treatment in a timely manner or prevent the illness.

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Briefs

DC approves
5 official
cattle
markets

ISLAMABAD:As Eid ul Azha approaches, the district administration of Islamabad have started preparations to regulate cattle trade across the Federal Capital and decided that the unauthorized animal selling points are being shut down, and five official cattle markets will be established in different areas of the capital under clear rules. With Eid ul Azha drawing near, the Islamabad administration has launched a plan to manage cattle trade in the city. Meanwhile, the district administration have started cracking down on illegal animal sale points set up at various locations, said the spokesman of ICT administration here. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, said that five official cattle markets will be established in different areas of the capital. These include Sanghani, Sector I-15, Bhara Kahu, Lehrtr Road, and Islamabad Expressway.

According to the deputy commissioner, tender notices for setting up these markets have already been issued. He stated that the official markets will be open from the 1st to the 13th of Zilhajj. No buying or selling of animals will be allowed before this period. Any cattle market outside the selected locations will be considered illegal. The administration has requested sellers to only bring their animals to the approved markets. Selling animals in any area not designated by the authorities will be considered a violation and will result in strict action.—APP

SAPM
identifies
issues in
enhancing
exports

ISLAMABAD:Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Tuesday chaired a meeting that identified challenges confronted in enhancing manufacturing sector's exports. The meeting identified key issues like high electricity costs, excessive taxation, and lack of value addition, said a news release. The SAPM emphasized that, in line with the Prime Minister's vision, exports are the lifeline of Pakistan's economy. He stressed the need for taking practical measures to increase exports. "The revival of the industrial sector and the enhancement of exports are key pillars of the Prime Minister's economic vision," he added. Committee members underlined the importance of technology upgradation and adherence to international standards as essential steps for strengthening exports. To address the identified challenges, Haroon formed sub-committees and assigned them specific responsibilities for immediate action.—APP

Chinese medical
companies to set up
units in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Federal Minister for Health, Mustafa Kamal, represented Pakistan at the International Medical and Innovation Center Convention held in Beijing, where he invited Chinese pharmaceutical and medical device companies to establish manufacturing units in Pakistan. The minister highlighted the numerous investment opportunities available in Pakistan and emphasized the government's commitment to providing full support and facilitation to foreign investors. The global convention was attended by senior Chinese

AI-driven farming crucial for Pak
climate resilience, food security

Internationally, countries like Vietnam are also embracing AI and digital technologies to transform their agricultural sectors. The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment in Vietnam is promoting green, smart, and sustainable practices. Major players such as Tan Long Group, Vinamilk, and TH Group have adopted AI-driven solutions to enhance efficiency and resource management

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Climate change is deeply affecting Pakistan, damaging crops, displacing communities, and increasing uncertainty for farmers. With Artificial Intelligence (AI), we can give farmers real-time information, improve planning, and reduce losses. It's not just technology; it's a lifeline for survival and sustainability in a warming world. Internationally, countries like Vietnam are also embracing AI and digital technologies to transform their agricultural sectors. The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment in Vietnam is promoting green, smart, and sustainable practices. Major players such as Tan Long Group, Vinamilk, and TH Group have adopted AI-driven solutions to enhance efficiency and resource management. Tan Long Group, for instance, is using AI and machine learning to monitor animal health and optimize environmental conditions through data from cameras and sensors. Similarly, Ireland collaborated with Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to launch an AI-powered monitoring framework aimed at improving crop yields while conserving soil and water under climate pressure. Such international examples offer insights into how AI integration can accelerate sustainable agricultural

development. In agriculture, AI-driven platforms are helping farmers predict weather changes, optimize irrigation, detect crop diseases early, and make data-driven decisions to protect their harvests. Talking to media, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ismail Kumbhar, an Agricultural Researcher and Sustainable Development Expert presently serving as Professor in the Department of Agricultural Education Extension and Short Courses at Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam, highlighted that the integration of AI into agriculture holds immense potential to revolutionize farming practices. Yet farmers in rural Sindh face significant challenges in adopting these technologies. He pointed out key barriers such as infrastructure deficiencies: many rural areas lack stable internet connectivity, which is critical for AI tools like drones or soil sensors, and frequent power outages further hinder the use of technology-dependent systems. High costs and financial constraints also pose serious challenges, as small-scale farmers dominating Sindh's agrarian landscape often cannot afford AI equipment or maintenance. Additionally, low awareness and technical literacy are major obstacles. Most farmers are unaware of AI's benefits or lack the necessary training to operate such technologies. Extension services rarely focus

on digital upskilling, and language barriers — like the unavailability of tech resources in Sindhi — compound the problem. Deep-rooted traditional practices further slow the adoption of AI at the field level. Environmental and regional suitability issues also arise, as AI models designed for other regions may not directly address Sindh's unique challenges, such as water scarcity and extreme heat, without costly customization. To overcome these barriers, stakeholders must prioritize improving rural infrastructure, subsidizing AI tools, and launching farmer-centric training programs. Policymakers should collaborate with tech firms to develop affordable, region-specific solutions, while awareness campaigns led by local influencers could build trust. Agriculture and technology experts emphasize the need for systemic reforms to bridge the digital divide not only in rural Sindh but across Pakistan. Maryam Abbasi, a Ph.D. scholar at the University of Vermont USA, pursuing Sustainable Development Policy, Economics and Governance, talking to media highlighted AI's significant role in enhancing Early Warning Systems. AI models can predict accurate weather patterns based on existing datasets, enabling timely actions to avoid damages caused by sudden hailstorms, droughts, floods, heatwaves, and

river flows. She urged Pakistan's farming community to quickly adopt Artificial Intelligence technologies to combat growing climate crisis. AI is emerging as a critical tool in the fight against these challenges. In agriculture, AI-driven platforms are helping farmers predict weather changes, optimize irrigation, detect crop diseases early, and make data-driven decisions to protect their harvests. A range of mobile medicalications have also become popular among farmers and home gardeners alike. By simply uploading a photo of a plant, users can now identify the plant species, diagnose health issues, and receive recommendations for treatment and care. Farmers are increasingly turning to these medias to monitor crop health, identify nutrient deficiencies, and take timely action, reducing the risk of major losses. Farmers in Pakistan are using mobile medicalications like Bakhbar Kissan, Ricult, and Agriculture Corner to access weather forecasts, market prices, crop advisory services, and pest control information. However, there is still potential to adopt more advanced AI-driven platforms such as Plantix for real-time plant disease diagnosis, CropIn for farm management solutions, and precision farming medias that use satellite imagery and AI to optimize crop yields and resource use.

IRSA
releases
124,800
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD:Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 124,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 128,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tabela Dam was 1430.52 feet which was 28.52 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 44,400 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1131.10 feet, which was 81.10 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 36,200 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 69,600, 47,900, 38,700 and 9,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 26,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 13,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Heat wave
fuels surge
in solar panel
sales in twin
Cities

ISLAMABAD:As an intense heat wave continues to grip the twin cities, residents are turning to solar energy in record numbers to reduce electricity bills and frequent power outages. Local solar panel dealers have reported a sharp rise in inquiries and installations over the past few weeks. The growing interest is driven by soaring temperatures, increased load shedding, and the rising cost of electricity. "We have seen a significant increase in demand, with many customers looking to install solar panels to reduce their electricity bills," said Muhammad Shabbir, owner of a local solar panel business. "It's great to see more people becoming interested in renewable energy." Salma, a resident of Islamabad, recently installed a solar system said, "It's been a lifesaver. The heat was becoming unbearable, but now I can keep my home cool without worrying about high bills," she said. "Installing solar panels was the best decision I ever made. My electricity costs have dropped significantly, and I feel good about helping the environment." Similarly, Saim Ali, a Rawalpindi resident, is planning to go solar. "It's a smart investment that will pay off in the long run. It's better for my wallet and better for the planet," he said. Experts say the growing shift toward solar energy is transforming the energy landscape of the region. With increasing awareness, better affordability, and improved installation services, solar energy is emerging as a sustainable alternative to traditional power sources. "The solar industry is growing rapidly," said Tahir Naeem, a solar panel businessman. "There's still a lot of potential for innovation and expansion.—APP



Rawalpindi: DS Railway Rawalpindi chairs important meeting following instructions of Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Tuesday.

Pahalgam failure,
Modi may plan
another drama

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Business leader and former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Tuesday that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strategy of orchestrating terror incidents for political gain has backfired, which has undermined his unholy agenda.

In a strongly worded statement, he declared that the recent Pahalgam incident, which was allegedly orchestrated to garner sympathy ahead of elections, has been fully exposed, leaving the BJP reeling. Rasheed Butt asserted that the BJP's defeat in the forthcoming elections now seems all but certain. He added that

the unwavering resolve of the Pakistan army and the fearless response of the Pakistani public have deeply unsettled the Indian leadership. Mr. Butt praised China's clear and timely support for Pakistan during this critical period, noting that it has won the hearts of the Pakistani people. "China has once again demonstrated its steadfast commitment to Pakistan, and the people of Pakistan recognize and value this friendship," he said. According to Butt, the Pakistani nation has shown remarkable unity in the face of external threats. "Regarding national security, all political differences are set aside. Our people stand united like a solid wall, resolute and with one voice," he emphasized. He also pointed out that while India accuses Pakistan with-

out proper investigation, dissenting voices within India, including opposition politicians and even former military commanders, have begun questioning Modi's aggressive posture. "Everyone in India knows that as elections near, the BJP government orchestrates some kind of false-flag operation to stir emotions," he observed. To the fallout from the Pahalgam incident, he criticized India's rash actions, including the baseless accusation against Pakistan, the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, the closure of the Wagah border, and the recalling of its diplomats. He argued that these steps were intended to manipulate public sentiment in the BJP's favour, especially in the politically crucial state of Bihar, where defeat seems imminent.

Two-day
DFDI forum
commences

ISLAMABAD:A two-day Digital Foreign Direct Investment (DFDI) Digital Forum began on Tuesday, with participants from 45 countries attending the event. Organized by the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication in collaboration with the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), the DFDI Digital Forum 2025 aims to position Pakistan as a key hub for digital investment, driving growth and innovation in the digital economy. More than 40 companies and startups are showcasing their products, while over 35 ministers and government delegations from various countries are participating. The forum also features more than 30 international speakers and over 50 CEOs from leading global IT companies.—APP

Senate body
focuses on MRI
availability at
FGPC Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Functional Committee on Government Assurances on Tuesday discussed the provision of a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine at the Federal Government Polyclinic Hospital (FGPC) in Islamabad. Chaired by Senator Abdul Shakoor Khan at the Old PIPS Hall, Parliament Lodges, officials informed the Committee that the MRI machine had been donated by Japan. As part of the agreement, Japanese experts will initially operate the equipment and train local staff, after which the hospital will take over full operations independently.

It was further stated that the machine has been installed and all related procedures have been completed. However, the commencement of operations is pending, as the department is awaiting a technical team from Japan. The department added that several attempts had been made to contact the technical team from Japan, most recently in March but the technical team responded that they would be arriving soon. To this effect, the committee recommended that recommendations should be sent to Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Senate Functional Committee on Government Assurance to urge the Japanese authorities to promptly send the technical team so the MRI machine can become operational and benefit patients without further delay. Furthermore, the committee discussed the assurance given by the Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training during the Senate sitting held on 3rd June 2022, in response to a question raised by Senator Kamran Murtaza regarding the time scale promotion of female teachers working under the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE). The Secretary of FDE comprehensively briefed the Committee and informed that those teachers who had completed the required service for the higher time scale have been promoted. Moreover, the committee also discussed dilapidated condition of the Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway (M-1) at various locations. The committee was informed that during 2022 the condition of the road was indeed poor, owing to funds. Since then, rehabilitation work has been carried out, and approximately 135.5 kilometers of the motorway have been rehabilitated. The committee also discussed the frequent congestion at toll plazas. The relevant department attributed this issue to public behavior, stating that despite conducting three separate campaigns making the M-Tag mandatory, running advertisements in newspapers, and launching public awareness initiatives people still prefer to pay in cash, which causes delays. The committee recommended that, in the interest of the country, the use of the M-Tag should be made mandatory. The meeting was attended by Senator Dost Muhammad Khan, Senator Gurdeep Singh and Senior Officers of the Ministries/relevant departments.—DNA

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 311

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

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Gaza is burning

UK NGOs must abandon failed diplomacy and fight back. Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz declared last week that "no humanitarian aid will enter Gaza", effectively announcing his government's intention to continue the collective punishment of the Palestinian enclave's battered and besieged civilian population in blatant violation of international humanitarian law. "Blocking this aid is one of the main pressure levers preventing Hamas from using it as a tool with the population," he went on to say, "No one is currently planning to allow any humanitarian aid into Gaza, and there are no preparations to enable such aid." Many leading NGOs and international institutions, such as Amnesty and Human Rights Watch, have long identified Israel's weaponisation of aid in Gaza as an act of genocide. In response to Katz's most recent comments, they once again condemned the Israeli government's genocidal policies and called on Israel's Western allies to take action to enforce international law. Such condemnations and calls to action, however, are clearly failing to produce the desired results. After 18 devastating months, Israel is still bombing, shooting at, displacing and starving Palestinians, while openly declaring its intention to continue with these crimes for the foreseeable future. And it is still doing so with the full political, military and diplomatic backing of its Western allies, including Britain. For the past 18 months, many of us working in the human rights and aid sectors in Britain made repeated requests to our government to do the bare minimum and enforce the basic tenets of international law on its ally, Israel. We campaigned, we lobbied, we engaged, and we explained. We showed the evidence, pointed to the law, and asked our leaders to do the right thing. Our pleas fell on deaf ears. We've been met with nothing but indifference. Keir Starmer's government continues to trade with and even sell arms to the Israeli government, despite being aware of the blatant crimes Israel commits day after day in Gaza and in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories. It still considers Israel a key ally despite knowing that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is reviewing an allegation of genocide directed at its "war" in Gaza and that there is an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant out for its prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, for various war crimes and crimes against humanity. Just last week, Britain's Foreign Secretary David Lammy held talks with Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar – the top diplomat of a government under investigation for genocide – while he was on an unannounced visit to London. The Foreign Ministry confirmed that Lammy met Sa'ar to "discuss Gaza and other pressing Middle East issues", during what it described as the Israeli minister's "private visit to the UK". This is unacceptable. British government officials should not be having any public or private meetings with senior ministers from a country accused of the most heinous crimes recognised in international law. They must not be "discussing Gaza and other pressing Middle East issues" with Israeli leaders while Israel continues to bomb refugee tents, kill journalists and medics, and block the delivery of aid to a population under relentless siege. No politician can claim ignorance of what is happening. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed. Many more have been maimed, traumatised and displaced.



China's AI push in agritech

As sufficiency improves for China and the countries it shares its agriculture+AI strategy with, regional and global trade could be reshaped. In the face of looming climate pressure, geopolitical tensions and a tit-for-tat tariff conflict with the United States, China unveiled a comprehensive 10-year agricultural master plan on April 7. Issued by the Communist Party's Central Committee and the State Council, the plan focuses on crop cultivation, livestock, fisheries and agricultural infrastructure, aiming to boost production. Building on frameworks such as the National Smart Agriculture Action Plan (2024–2028) and 14th five-year agricultural plan (2021–2025), the new strategy places artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies at the forefront of China's agricultural modernisation. As the world's largest agricultural producer and importer, China has long made food security a priority. But it is an uphill battle – China must feed one-fifth of the global population with under 10 per cent of the world's arable land and even less of the freshwater resources. China's food self-sufficiency rate has been dropping, from 93.6 per cent in 2000 to 65.8 per cent in 2020. Projections are grim: the rate is forecast to fall further to 58.8 per cent by 2030, heightening import reliance. For Beijing, the benefits of an "agriculture+AI" strategy are clear. Beyond strengthening China's agricultural technology and AI export sectors, integrating AI into agricultural production can address long-standing inefficiencies. It could reduce post-harvest food losses, which averaged 14 per cent in recent years, according to a 2022 State Council study. AI-driven tools that enable precision farming, such as predictive analytics, drones and autonomous machinery, can help Chinese farmers maximise crop yields in the face of environmental challenges and rural labour shortages. It would also allow the Chinese authorities to free up land to grow critical staples like soybeans, of which around 80 per cent are imported. Importantly, strengthening Chinese food production through an agriculture+AI strategy could reshape global and regional agricultural trade. A more food-secure China may begin exporting more of its agricultural products, competing with traditional Western exporters like the US and Australia. By increasing productivity, reducing food waste, lowering costs and enabling earlier detection of crop pests, Chinese AI-driven agricultural technologies are already helping the world meet rising food demand. Such cost-effective technologies are urgently needed to boost production, particularly in the Global South. As China deepens its technological cooperation with Global South countries, Chinese AI-driven agricultural advances could significantly boost production and food security in partners countries too, lowering food prices – and potentially further disrupting established trade flows. Indeed, faced with steep US tariffs and tensions with Washington, Beijing is working to deepen its regional and global supply chains; this includes expanding its geopolitical and geoeconomic influence through AI-driven agricultural technologies. Agreements like the 2023 Global AI Governance Initiative and partnerships with blocs including the Association of South-east Asian Nations, Arab League and African Union reflect this strategic push.

India-Pakistan war guaranteed mutual destruction

Qamar Bashir



The most terrifying scenario is a descent into nuclear confrontation.

While India officially follows a "No First Use" policy, recent shifts in rhetoric have cast doubts on how firmly that policy would be followed in crisis. Pakistan, for its part, has always maintained that it reserves the right to use nuclear weapons if national survival is at stake.

Pakistan's tactical nuclear weapons, such as the Nasr missile, are designed to neutralize Indian advances and signal deterrence.

Should Pakistan face overwhelming force, it could launch limited nuclear strikes against advancing troops or even strategic urban targets

IN the wake of a tragic terrorist attack, Indian leadership, spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, vowed to punish not only those directly involved but also their alleged backers and facilitators. Without any conclusive investigation or hard evidence, India hastily pointed fingers at Pakistan. Now, with war rhetoric at its peak, the likelihood of punitive Indian action against Pakistan cannot be dismissed. However, while retaliatory strikes may appear attractive politically, the reality on the ground—shaped by complex military balances, nuclear deterrence, and third-party interests—makes any such action perilous for all sides. India essentially has five military options: a surgical strike, a full-scale war, a missile attack, a naval offensive, or a commando raid. Each comes with monumental risks. A limited ground incursion to "punish" Pakistan might seem feasible, but India's past experience in 2019 revealed the limitations of such operations. Pakistan today is far more prepared, with enhanced surveillance, defensive deployments along the Line of Control, and swift retaliatory capabilities. Any such strike would provoke immediate, proportionate retaliation, rapidly escalating the conflict. A missile strike may seem like a low-risk option. India possesses an extensive array of ballistic and cruise missiles, including the Agni series, with ranges of 700 km to over 5,000 km. It also fields the BrahMos cruise missile—one of the world's fastest. Pakistan, however, has developed a credible missile arsenal of its own. The Shaheen I and II ballistic missiles offer ranges up to 2,500 km. The Babur cruise missile, comparable to the U.S. Tomahawk, has a precision strike range of 700 km and can be launched from land, air, or sea. Pakistan is estimated to possess over 200 cruise missiles, capable of delivering nuclear or conventional payloads. India's dense population and industrial clusters make it disproportionately vulnerable. A missile war would ensure mutual devastation, with potentially higher economic losses for India. While India enjoys a numerical advantage, Pakistan's full-spectrum deterrence and strike capability mean that no missile attack will go unanswered. India's Air Force fields over 2,100 aircraft, including Rafales, Su-30MKIs, and Mirage 2000s. Pakistan's Air Force, with around 900 aircraft, includes JF-17 Thunders, F-16s, and upgraded Mirage jets. Though smaller in size, the Pakistani

Air Force is tightly organized, well-drilled, and supported by robust air defense systems. The 2019 Balakot episode demonstrated Pakistan's readiness to retaliate with precision, neutralizing Indian airspace violations and capturing an Indian pilot without triggering wider escalation. India's navy, the fifth-largest in the world, clearly outclasses Pakistan's smaller maritime force. However, Pakistan's upgraded coastal surveillance, submarine capability, and anti-ship missile systems, such as the Harbah and Babur naval variants, offer enough deterrence to discourage a naval conflict. Any strike on Pakistani ports or vessels would be matched with retaliatory action, resulting in shared losses and open-water instability. India might consider inserting special forces into Pakistan through helicopters or aircraft for sabotage missions. Yet, Pakistan's border monitoring and elite Special Services Group significantly reduce the chances of success. Such actions could backfire, lead to operational failures, or even provoke a cycle of asymmetric escalations that drag both countries deeper into conflict.

The most terrifying scenario is a descent into nuclear confrontation. While India officially follows a "No First Use" policy, recent shifts in rhetoric have cast doubts on how firmly that policy would be followed in crisis. Pakistan, for its part, has always maintained that it reserves the right to use nuclear weapons if national survival is at stake. Pakistan's tactical nuclear weapons, such as the Nasr missile, are designed to neutralize Indian advances and signal deterrence. Should Pakistan face overwhelming force, it could launch limited nuclear strikes against advancing troops or even strategic urban targets. India would almost certainly retaliate massively, setting off a chain reaction of destruction. Both nations maintain between 150 to 165 nuclear warheads, with long-range delivery systems capable of reaching any city within minutes. A nuclear exchange would flatten cities, kill tens of millions, and cripple both economies. The environmental fallout and global panic would echo far beyond South Asia. The world has long feared a nuclear exchange on the subcontinent. One misstep, one misjudgment, is all it takes.

To further complicate the crisis, China is a critical stakeholder in this conflict. Beijing controls parts of Kashmir (Aksai Chin) and thus has a direct territorial interest in any conflict involving disputed regions. More importantly, China has invested over \$62 billion in the China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of its Belt and Road Initiative. This corridor passes through Gilgit-Baltistan, a region also claimed by India. Any military operation threatening the corridor's security would directly harm Chinese strategic and economic interests. China's involvement in water resources in the region and its hydro projects in Pakistani-administered Kashmir also make it sensitive to instability. Any disruption caused by Indian military activity could trigger diplomatic retaliation, or in the worst case, military or economic responses. While China may avoid direct conflict, it will not tolerate destruction or destabilization of its assets. At the very least, it will act to rein in escalation through diplomatic backchannels and multilateral forums. At the most, it could lend rapid material and strategic support to Pakistan to preserve regional balance. Given these realities, diplomacy is the only logical course. Pakistan has already extended an offer to form a joint investigation commission or allow an independent international inquiry. Accepting such an offer would demonstrate leadership maturity, avoid speculative strikes, and potentially reveal the real perpetrators behind the attack.

An impartial investigation would help hold the actual culprits accountable and prevent collective punishment or regional destruction. It would also show the international community that India and Pakistan, despite historical hostility, can still act in line with global norms, and in the greater interest of peace. This moment presents a defining choice: escalate into an uncontrollable disaster, or rise above vengeance and act with restraint. India and Pakistan must recognize that no military solution can secure long-term peace. Both are proud nations, with immense potential, but their destinies remain entangled. A war between them would have no victor—only scorched earth, shattered lives, and a legacy of loss. There is still time to avert catastrophe. Dialogue is not a weakness. It is the only path left to those wise enough to understand that total war, especially in a nuclear neighborhood, leaves no room for honor, no space for victory, and no future for anyone.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister at
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC
Macomb, Detroit

Wages, worth, and the worker's woes

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The situation is particularly bleak in the private sector, especially in industries like the media and newspapers.

Journalists and media workers, who tirelessly report on social injustices and workers' issues, are themselves deprived of regular salaries and annual increments. Many have not seen a raise in years. Their payments are delayed, and some are even expected...

MAY 1 is observed worldwide as a symbol of solidarity with workers. On this day, public holiday is declared, rallies are taken out, seminars are held, and declarations are made asserting the rights of workers. The slogans raised emphasize that workers should not be exploited and must be given their due rights. However, an important question remains; can the true goals of workers' rights be achieved merely through symbolic celebrations, speeches, and rallies? This is not just a rhetorical query—it strikes at the core of how we treat the labor force in our society. In the true sense, who is a worker? The conventional definition often remains limited to factory workers or those involved in physical labor, but in essence, anyone who offers their time, skill, or effort in return for wages qualifies as a worker. Whether they work in a field, an office, a factory, a newsroom, or even a shop, their labor contributes to the economy and the structure of society. Yet despite this vital role, their financial reality is often harsh and unforgiving. Inflation continues to rise, but do wages follow suit? A basic question with a deeply unsettling answer. The cost of living has multiplied manifold. Utility bills, food prices, rents, transportation—everything has surged. A worker, after a full day of hard labor, must at least eat three proper meals a day to keep his energy intact for the next shift. But can the average worker afford this, let alone provide adequately for a family? The situation is particularly bleak in the private sector, especially in industries like the media and newspapers. Journalists and media workers, who tirelessly report on social injustices and workers' issues, are themselves deprived of regular salaries and annual increments. Many have not seen a raise in years. Their payments are delayed, and some are even expected to work overtime without any additional compensation. On May Day, they might report on workers' rights but

are unable to voice their own concerns. Who listens to the cries of those who amplify the voices of others? Celebrating May Day in air-conditioned halls, delivering eloquent speeches, and raising revolutionary slogans have become annual rituals. But the real test lies in practical action. The worker is not interested in words—he wants enforcement. He wants policies that protect his rights, timely payments, fair wages, health benefits, job security, and respectful treatment at the workplace. He wants his dignity preserved not just for a day but every day of the year. There's also an irony in declaring May 1 a public holiday. For many daily wage earners, a holiday simply means a cut in wages. They are forced to stay home without pay while others rest. For small shopkeepers, laborers, and informal workers, the day's income is lost, and this loss is rarely compensated. Is this how we show solidarity? To address this imbalance and genuinely improve the lives of workers, it is essential to move from mere rhetoric to action. The government must legislate and strictly enforce a living wage policy that adjusts automatically with inflation. This would help ensure that a worker's earning can sustain his basic needs and those of his family. Moreover, it is crucial to mandate annual increments for both skilled and unskilled labor across sectors, particularly in private organizations that often escape regulation. Timely disbursement of wages should be a legal obligation, not a matter of discretion. Workers in the media, health, education, and other essential services must be brought under labor protection laws with transparent complaint redressal systems. Establishing independent labor commissions with the authority to investigate and penalize exploitative practices can help hold employers accountable. Trade unions should be encouraged, not curbed, and their voices must be heard in policy-making forums. Additionally, social security pro-

grams including health insurance, old-age benefits, and access to affordable housing should be expanded and effectively implemented. For daily wage earners and informal sector workers who lose income on May Day and other public holidays, a compensatory fund can be created to offset their day's loss, funded by contributions from employers, industries, and the government. In this way, solidarity can move beyond symbolism and become a tangible reality. In Islam, the rights of workers are sacred and clearly outlined. The teachings of the Quran and Hadith place immense emphasis on justice, fairness, and timely fulfillment of obligations. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Pay the laborer his wages before his sweat dries." This hadith alone is a powerful charter of labor rights, far superior to many modern codes. Islam prohibits any form of exploitation and promotes the idea of equitable compensation. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes justice (Adl) and kindness (Ihsan) in dealings with others, particularly with the vulnerable, which includes workers. Our society, despite commemorating May Day with fanfare, seems to have drifted far from this vision. The working class is still waiting for the fulfillment of promises, for legislation to be implemented, and for their voices to be heard not only on May 1 but throughout the year. Token gestures and media headlines are not enough. Concrete reforms are required—laws must be enforced, wages must be reviewed, and accountability must be ensured for exploiters. May Day is not just a holiday. It is a reminder, a call for reflection, and more importantly, a day to renew our collective commitment to human dignity and labor justice. The true tribute to laborers lies not in slogans but in actions. Only when our policies, our economy, and our society begin to respect the toil of every worker, can we claim to honor the spirit of May Day—both in letter and in soul.

Briefs

India
sponsoring
terrorism...

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inside Pakistan," he said. DG ISPR reiterated that the evidence underscored India's active role in supplying explosives to terrorists operating within Pakistan's borders. He called on the international community to take notice of India's actions.

Dar apprises
UAE,
Kuwaiti...

FROM PAGE 01
stability, and sustainable development. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Tuesday received a telephone call from Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya. "The DPM/FM briefed his counterpart on the evolving regional situation, including India's baseless propaganda and illegal unilateral measures against Pakistan," Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. Reaffirming the deep-rooted and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Kuwait, FM Al-Yahya assured Kuwait's support to Pakistan.

IMF to
decide on
bailout...

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on the sidelines of the WB/IMF Spring Meetings 2025 in Washington and reaffirmed the government's commitment to reforms in key sectors. Separately, the lender has downgraded Pakistan's economic growth projection for the current fiscal year from 3% to 2.6% — the World Bank however projects 2.7% growth in the fiscal year ending June 2025. In its, World Economic Outlook report, the IMF noted that the country's GDP growth for the next fiscal year (2025–26) is projected to rise to 3.6%. Inflation in Pakistan — which stood at 23.4% in 2024 — is forecast at 5.1% for the current fiscal year, with the IMF projecting it to rise further to 7.7% in the next fiscal year. The IMF also revised its forecast for Pakistan's current account deficit. It now expects the deficit to stand at 0.1% of GDP, compared to its earlier estimate of 1%. In nominal terms, the current account gap is expected to be just \$400 million, instead of the previously projected \$3.7 billion. For 2026, the lender expects the current account deficit to further increase to 0.4% of the GDP. The unemployment rate is projected to remain at 8% in 2025 — down from 8.3% in 2024 — with a further expected decrease to 7.5% in 2026, according to the report.

PSX claws
back from
steep...

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The previous close was recorded at 114,063.90. Analysts attributed the recovery to the announcement that the IMF Executive Board will soon meet to approve a \$1.3 billion loan for Pakistan and a new 28-month support programme to help the country deal with long-term economic challenges. The IMF board is scheduled to meet on May 9 to discuss the \$1.3 billion SLA with Pakistan under its ongoing 37-month bailout programme. The meeting, as per the statement issued by the IMF, will cater to Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility (EFF), request for the modification of performance criteria, and request for an arrangement under RSF.

Indian
media...

FROM PAGE 01
accusations after the Pahalgam incident. A Pakistani diplomat and seven staff members crossed into Pakistan through the Wagah safely. Despite Indian aggression and blame over the Pahalgam issue, cross-border movement of citizens is continuing through the Wagah Border. However, the behaviour of Indian media has once again put a question mark on diplomatic decorum.

Bellingham among three
Real Madrid players

Bellingham was then red carded after the final whistle for showing an "aggressive attitude" towards the referee, who wrote that the midfielder "had to be restrained by his teammates"



BARCELONA: Substitute Antonio Rudiger sees red for 'throwing an object' at referee amid pre-match controversy surrounding officials. 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. Hansi Flick's side, aiming for a quadruple this season, extended their record of

Spanish cup wins to 32 in dramatic fashion. Three Real Madrid players were sent off during and after a fiery conclusion to the game, including England international Jude Bellingham. 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. "Madrid pushed us to our limits but we showed great character and pride," Kounde said. Barca host Inter Milan in the Champions League semi-finals on Wednesday. Substituted Madrid defender Antonio Rudiger was sent off in the final seconds for "throwing an object" onto the pitch towards

referee Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea, according to the official's report, and Lucas Vazquez, also replaced, was dismissed for further protest as Madrid unravelled. Bellingham was then red carded after the final whistle for showing an "aggressive attitude" towards the referee, who wrote that the midfielder "had to be restrained by his teammates". "I don't know what happened at the referee," Madrid coach Ancelotti said after the match. "I don't know what happened at the end." Madrid had issued furious statements about the refereeing team on Friday after they criticised the club's television channel for attacking Spanish officials this season, casting a shadow over the game. But, controversy aside, the football was enthralling. Madrid started with top scorer Mbappe on the bench after an ankle injury and lost Ferland Mendy early on with a thigh issue. Barcelona winger Lamine Yamal, 17, dyed his hair blond for the game and led the assault on Thibaut Courtois' goal. The Catalans had beaten their Clasicos rivals 4-0 and 5-2 in their previous encounters this season. 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, a sensational goal set up by Yamal. Barcelona could have doubled their lead, with Dani Olmo's corner hitting the post and Cubarsi unable to turn home as Dani Ceballos held him back. — Agencies

Chinese badminton team seeks
4th consecutive sudirman cup title

XIAMEN: The Chinese national badminton team started its Sudirman Cup World Mixed Team Badminton Championships on Sunday, with a squad featuring veterans and promising newcomers who aim for an unprecedented fourth consecutive title and a record 14th overall championship. Starting their campaign for the title on Sunday, the Chinese national team, with squad adjustments after the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics, defeated Team Algeria with a convincing 5-0 at the Xiamen Fenghuang Gymnasium in East China's Fujian Province. The tournament, the first major world team badminton event in the build-up to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, is considered an opportunity for China to test its squad. In the history of the Sudir-

man Cup, only China, South Korea, and Indonesia have claimed the coveted title, with China's dominance in the sport having been witnessed by 13 victories. After achieving a three-peak success in Suzhou in 2023, the Chinese team is eager to extend their winning streak. Female singles ace Chen Yufei and doubles veteran Chen Qingchen took temporary breaks from the court, while men's world No.1 Shi Yuqi has been recovering from a knee injury, and the mixed-doubles pairings of Huang Dongping and Feng Yanzhe, and Jiang Zhenbang and Wei Yaxin have been reconfigured. The ability of both veterans and rookies to quickly find their rhythm in the group stage will be crucial to China's title-defense bid in Xiamen. Facing such a tough

competition, the Chinese players remain resolute. "The atmosphere of a team event is quite different from that of an individual event," men's singles ace Shi told reporters. "Playing at home, with teammates cheering from the sidelines, and the audience supporting us, it will definitely boost our performance on the court." Among the doubles pairs, the young mixed-doubles duo Jiang Zhenbang and Wei Yaxin, who are making their Sudirman Cup debut, are full of anticipation. "I hope to show my best in the tournament and contribute points to the team," Wei said, before Jiang adding that he is looking forward to contributing to the team on the stage. Men's doubles mainstays Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang, who are also

online sensations for their active personalities, are focused on managing their energy properly through the enduring campaign. "We want to play in every match, but we also need to manage our energy properly," Liang said, noting his form is on the rise thanks to the playing test in the Asian Championships earlier in April. Huang Dongping and Feng Yanzhe, another mixed-doubles pair, have their eyes on the prize. "Every Sudirman Cup is a unique experience; and this time, I'll approach the competition with even more rigor," Huang said. Women's doubles world No.1 pair, Liu Shengshu and Tan Ning, is aware of the pressure and responsibility. "We want to let go of the pressure and show the power of youth," said Tan. — Agencies

Usyk vs Dubois
Heavyweight
fight confirmed

AGENCIES

THE Oleksandr Usyk-Daniel Dubois rematch for the undisputed heavyweight world championship has been officially scheduled. World heavyweight champions Oleksandr Usyk and Daniel Dubois will fight for the undisputed title at London's Wembley Stadium on July 19, Frank Warren's Queensberry Promotions said. Undeclared Ukrainian Usyk holds the WBC, WBA and WBO belts and is seeking to become the four-belt undisputed heavyweight champion for the second time, while Briton Dubois is the IBF holder. Usyk has faced Dubois before, earning a controversial ninth-round knockout win in Wroclaw, Poland, in August 2023, after being given time to recover from what the referee ruled to have been a low blow. That fight was for the WBA, IBF and WBO belts, before Usyk became the undisputed champion in May 2024, when he beat Britain's Tyson Fury. The 38-year-old Ukrainian vacated the IBF belt last year, before a December rematch with Fury, with Dubois upgraded to champion and defending the title against compatriot Anthony Joshua last September. "I'm grateful to God for the opportunity to once again fight for the undisputed championship," Usyk, who has a 23-0 record, said in the statement released on Sunday. "Thank you, Daniel, for taking care of my IBF belt — now I want it back."

Hasan looks to end up
in top two positions

WEB DESK

KARACHI: Karachi Kings vice-captain Hasan Ali has said that the side aims to end up in the top two positions in the PSL 10 table. The right-handed pacer recently became the leading wicket-taker in the history of the Pakistan Super League with 121 wickets from 88 matches at an average of 22.09. With 13 wickets in six games, the Karachi Kings pacer is topping the bowling charts of the ongoing edition of the tournament. In a recent interview with PCB Digital, Hasan Ali discussed his performance and his side's planning for their upcoming games. "I'm satisfied with my performance as I'm leading the bowling charts after six games for Karachi Kings. It feels great when you take wickets for your team regularly," he said. When asked about his bowling rhythm in PSL 10, Hasan Ali said that he modified the basics of his bowling, and worked on his fitness and diet which helped him a lot this season. Hasan Ali maintained that Karachi Kings were looking to finish strong in the group stage despite losing their previous game against Quetta Gladiators. The right-arm pacer expressed his excitement for their upcoming game against the archrivals Lahore Qalandars. "As players we always want to play in front of bigger crowds and we are looking forward to our 4 May fixture against Lahore Qalandars. I hope the crowds turn out in big numbers and we entertain them with our skills," he said.

Haris Rauf shares his views on
single-ball proposal in ODIs

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan speedster Haris Rauf has reacted to the proposed changes in the International Cricket Council's (ICC) rules for the bowling side in ODIs. Reports emerged earlier that the ICC Cricket Committee proposed scrapping the use of two new balls in ODIs. As per the proposal, the bowling sides will start with two new balls, however, they will be able to use only one ball from the 25-over mark. The bowling side would have the option to choose which of the two balls to continue with. Reacting to the proposal, Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf called it a "lifeline" for pacers amid batting-friendly conditions and rules in the game. "When the ball gets older after 25 overs, it helps the bowlers, just like it used to in the past. Now, the ball hardly gets old and everyone thinks of scoring 400-plus runs," he said while speaking to a private media outlet. According to Haris Rauf, reverse swing will come into play if the ICC tweaks the two-ball rule in the ODIs. If ICC is considering using one ball after 25 overs, it is a good move because with an old ball, reverse swing is possible," he said. The right-arm pacer also addressed the criticism faced by the Pakistan bowlers for conceding runs in their games.



"It feels like only Pakistan's bowlers concede runs, but fast bowlers all around the world are struggling due to short boundaries and demand for high-scoring games," he said.

ACL Elite quarter-finals: Ronaldo helps Al Nassr

JEDDAH: The battle to win the inaugural edition of the newly rebranded AFC Champions League Elite continued with the quarter-finals this weekend, with three Saudi clubs still in contention for Asia's most prestigious club trophy. Al Hilal, Al Nassr and Al Ahli have been among the favorites to lift the continental title from the start, and have seen off competition from clubs in Qatar, UAE, Japan and South Korea to reach the latter stages of the tournament. The new look 'finals' stage got underway in Jeddah on Friday, with the semi-finals and final also taking place in Saudi Arabia this week, ending on May 4. It was the clubs from West Asia that dominated — with Al Nassr, Al Hilal and Al Ahli all making it through to the semi-finals; the latter two sides will now meet in the first semi-final on Tuesday, while Cristiano Ronaldo and his team-mates will face Japan's Kawasaki Frontale on Wednesday. Here, Al Arabiya English rounds up the biggest moments from the AFC Champions League Elite quarter-finals. Al Nassr remains in the hunt for a first ever AFC Champions League triumph after captain Cristiano Ronaldo and record signing Jhon Duran helped Stefano Pioli's side to a comfortable 4-1 win over Yokohama F. Marinos. The Japanese team was a losing finalist last season but this time around, Al Nassr swept Yokohama aside with ease in Jeddah. A stunning first-half display saw Al Nassr spring into a three-goal lead before the interval — and the Riyadh club professionally closed the game out — a task made easier after Yokohama was reduced to 10 men in the second half. Ronaldo and Duran both

scored in the last-16 victory over Esteghlal and repeated the trick in Saturday's quarter-final. Al Nassr's opener had a touch of good fortune as Sadio Mane's cross was sliced awkwardly against his own post by Yokohama center-back Thomas Deng. The ball rebounded into the path of a grateful Duran, who struck the ball into an empty net for his third ACL Elite goal since arriving from Aston Villa in January. Mane doubled the lead himself four minutes later, picking up Otavio's pass before seamlessly slotting the ball past Park Il-gyu. The Yokohama goalkeeper's goal was breached again soon after as Ronaldo, one of several stars left in the competition who could become the first player to win both the UEFA and AFC Champions Leagues, reacted quickest as Park parried Marcelo Brozovic's shot



into his path. The Portuguese No. 7 volleyed home his eighth ACL Elite goal of the season and is now just one goal off top spot in the race for the Asian Golden Boot. Al Nassr moved completely out of sight just four minutes after half-time as Yokohama goalkeeper Park was once again punished for not getting the ball out safely when making a save. This time it was Duran again who finished from inside the penalty box to send the Al Nassr fans wild. Kota Watanabe managed to score a consolation goal for Yokohama but when the Japanese midfielder was then sent off it was about damage limitation for his team. Al Nassr maintained its three-goal cushion to book a semi-final with another Japanese outfit, Kawasaki Frontale. Al Hilal cruised into the ACL Elite semi-finals with a dazzling 7-0 win over Gwangju, sending a powerful

warning to the other remaining clubs in the competition. Seven different players — including Sergej Milinkovic-Savic, Marcos Leonardo, and Salem al-Dawsari — found the net in a performance that left no doubt about Al Hilal's ambition to lift a fifth continental title. While domestic form has wavered, Jorge Jesus' side remains a force on the Asian stage, overwhelming its South Korean opponent in front of a lively crowd in Jeddah. Among the standout performers was Aleksandar Mitrovic, who showed signs of returning to top form after a hamstring layoff earlier this year. The Serbian striker was a constant menace, scoring one goal and setting up two more, helping to tear Gwangju apart with his movement and physicality. As Al Hilal's attack clicked into gear around him, Mitrovic's sharpness will be key to its hopes of finishing the job and winning a first Asian trophy for coach Jesus. For Gwangju, a historic maiden campaign ended in brutal fashion. Having defied expectations to reach the last eight, Lee Jung-hyo's team ran into a ruthless Al Hilal side that punished every mistake. An early missed chance to equalize proved costly before the goals rained in. Meanwhile, Salem al-Dawsari continued his outstanding form, drawing level with Gwangju's Jasir Asani in the race for the tournament's Golden Boot, and also moving into fourth place on the list of the AFC Champions League's all-time leading scorers. Ahead of its semi-final against Thailand's Buriram United, Al Ahli coach Matthias Jaissle outlined his belief that his team has what it takes to lift its first AFC Champions League title. — Agencies

PM Shehbaz
hails \$700m
pledges...

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by digital transformation." He reaffirmed the government's commitment to positioning Pakistan as the next major tech destination in the world. "Our youth, aged between 15 and 30, constitute 60% of the population. They are the architects of our digital future," said the prime minister. He highlighted the government's strategic initiatives including the launch of federal and provincial IT parks, incubation centers, and a large-scale R&D ecosystem. He announced a new partnership with global technology giant Huawei, which will train 200,000 boys and girls annually through a joint skill development program. He said that in March this year, Pakistan received a record-breaking \$4.1 billion in foreign remittances, signaling growing trust in the country's digital potential.

Govt won't
approve any
anti-Sindh..

FROM PAGE 01
Sindh with sit-ins and other forms of protest across the province, causing a headache to the government. The project was taken back by a decision of the Council of Common Interest (CCI) in a meeting on Monday. "A drop of water if taken from the Indus River, we will deem it declaration of war," he said. "India knows well our stance on the river water," he further said. "We will not be scared of hollow threats with regard to the Indus Water Treaty," Sindh CM said while commenting over Indian announcement of suspending the river water treaty with Pakistan after Pehalgam incident in Indian occupied Kashmir.

Pakistan
preparing
to challenge
suspension..

FROM PAGE 01
India last week suspended the World Bank-mediated Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 after the attack in Kashmir, saying it would last until "Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism". Islamabad denies any involvement in the attack in which 26 people were killed. India says two of three assailants it has identified were from Pakistan. Islamabad has said "any attempt to stop or divert the flow of water belonging to Pakistan ... will be considered as an act of war". Pakistan has also suspended all trade with India and closed its airspace to Indian airlines.

Pakistan
tells UN
'Regional...

FROM PAGE 01
Security forces launched a two-day operation, concluding on March 12. Inter-Services Public Relations Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said that all 33 terrorists were neutralised, but no hostages were harmed in the final rescue phase. During the launch of the "Victims of Terrorism Association Network" by the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism at the UN headquarters in New York, Jawad Ajmal, a counsellor at the Pakistan Mission, expressed concern at the loss of tourist lives in the recent Pahalgam attack, and extended "heartfelt condolences to the near ones of the deceased and wish the injured a speedy recovery."

No change
in POL...

FROM PAGE 01
with Brent crude holding at \$65.52 per barrel and WTI crude at \$61.87 per barrel, amid concerns over oversupply and uncertainty surrounding ongoing US-China tariff talks. However, kerosene prices are expected to rise by 0.8% (Rs1.30 per litre), increasing from Rs169.38 to Rs170.68 per litre. Similarly, Light Diesel Oil (LDO) prices are likely to climb by Rs1.35 per litre, from Rs153.04 to Rs154.39 per litre. For the previous fortnight, the federal government announced that fuel prices would remain unchanged, and any savings would be diverted toward infrastructure projects.

Briefs

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 808.28 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 808.28 points, a positive change of 0.71 percent, closing at 114,972.18 points as compared to 114,063.90 points on last trading day. A total of 409,933,985 shares were traded during the day as compared to 423,938,288 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 29,067 billion against Rs 26.458 billion on the last trading day. As many as 445 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 211 of them recorded gains and 183 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 51 companies remained unchanged. —APP

Gold price up by Rs.2,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs.2,100 and was sold at Rs.349,200 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs. 347,100 on the last trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs.1,800 to Rs.299,382 from Rs. 297,582 whereas that of 10 gram 22 Karat went up to Rs.274,443 from Rs.272,784. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3,497 and Rs.2,998 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$21 to \$3,310 from \$3,289 whereas silver rates were recorded at \$32.97, the Association reported. —APP

Rupee gains 04 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 04 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 281.02 against the previous day's closing of Rs 281.06. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 281.40 and Rs 282.90, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.42 to close at Rs 320.43 against the last day's closing of Rs 319.01, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 02 paise and closed at Rs 1.97, whereas an increase of Rs 2.87 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 377.22 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 374.35. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 and 01 paise each to close at Rs 76.50 and Rs 74.91 respectively. —APP

Sri Lanka looks to attract Saudi travelers to diversify tourist influx

COLOMBO: Saudi Arabia is one of Sri Lanka's priority markets for tourism, authorities have told Arab News, as the island nation seeks to attract more visitors from the Kingdom to diversify its tourist base. Tourism has been on the mend in Sri Lanka as the island nation recovers from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its worst economic crisis in decades. In 2024, the sector that is traditionally one of key sources of foreign reserves welcomed more than 2 million tourists and earned about \$3 billion. To further boost its hospitality sector, Sri Lankan officials are planning to lessen its reliance on conventional tourist markets and target new visitors, especially those from Saudi Arabia. Recognizing the immense potential of the Saudi market, Sri Lanka has positioned Saudi Arabia as a key priority in its tourism promotion efforts," Madusha Perera, assistant director for marketing at the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, told Arab News recently. "The country aims to tap into the growing outbound travel market in Saudi Arabia —APP

Gilani calls deeper interregional parliamentary coop to achieve SDGs

Citing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a prime example, he illustrated how shared infrastructure, energy, and trade initiatives can bring transformative regional benefits

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani stressed the need for deeper interregional parliamentary cooperation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Chairman while delivering a keynote address at the Third Edition of the South-South Parliamentary Dialogue Forum held in Rabat, Morocco expressed his profound gratitude to the hosts—the President of the House of Councillors of the kingdom of Morocco, Mr. Mohamed Ould Errachid, and the Association of Senates, Shooraa, and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA)—for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements. Highlighting the significance of the event, Chairman Senate underscored that the Global South, with its vast natural resources and dynamic human capital, holds a pivotal role in reshaping the global development agenda said a news release. However, he stressed that realizing this potential requires coordinated action, mutual understanding, and a shared vision for peace, stability, and development. He emphasized Pakistan's unwavering commitment to South-South co-operation, noting that Pakistan's strategic geographic location—at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and China—offers a unique vantage point for promoting regional con-



nectivity and collaboration. Citing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a prime example, he illustrated how shared infrastructure, energy, and trade initiatives can bring transformative regional benefits. Chairman Senate further stated that while economic growth remains crucial, it must be complemented by efforts to address climate change, promote inclusive development, and secure fair access to climate finance—particularly for countries like Pakistan, which contribute minimally to global emissions but suffer disproportionately from cli-

mate-related impacts. He also referenced Pakistan's flagship Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) as a successful model for social protection and poverty alleviation, reinforcing Pakistan's commitment to inclusive, people-centered development. Addressing fellow parliamentarians, He noted that regional solidarity, policy alignment, and joint strategies are essential to overcoming challenges such as poverty eradication, food security, education, and healthcare. On the global front, Chairman Senate called for a fairer international order

where developing countries have a stronger voice in global decision-making platforms, including the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and international financial institutions. He advocated for reforms that reflect contemporary realities and ensure equitable, inclusive global governance. "Strengthening South-South cooperation is not a rejection of the global system," he stated, "it is a step towards improving it—a system where no region is left behind." Chairman Senate urged participants to leave the Forum with a renewed sense

of responsibility, emphasizing the need to strengthen inter-parliamentary networks, promote inclusive legislation, and build institutional capacities through mutual cooperation and exchange programs. He reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast commitment to unity, innovation, and mutual respect, asserting that through collective efforts, the Global South can lead the way towards a more just, equitable, and sustainable world.

Meanwhile Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and his delegation were warmly welcomed at a lunch hosted by Mr. Mohamed Ould Rachid, President of the House of Councillors of Morocco. The lunch was organized in honor of the delegations from 31 countries attending the South-South Parliamentary Dialogue Forum. Chairman Gilani's delegation included Senator Dost Ali Jassar from PPP, Senator Saadia Abbasi from PML-N, and Senator Khalida Ateeq from MQM. The lunch provided an opportunity for meaningful interactions and discussions among lawmakers from diverse backgrounds. The event highlighted the strong ties between Pakistan and Morocco, as well as the commitment to fostering international cooperation and diplomacy. Chairman Gilani's visit to Morocco underscores Pakistan's dedication to engaging in fruitful dialogue and collaboration with nations worldwide.

India shuts over half of Kashmir tourist spots in security review

SRINAGAR, India: More than half of the tourist destinations in India's insurgency-torn Kashmir region have been closed to the public from Tuesday, according to a government order reviewed by Reuters, in a bid to tighten security after last week's attack on holiday-makers. The assailants segregated men, asked their names and targeted Hindus before shooting them at close range in the Pahalgam area, killing 26 people, officials and survivors said. India has identified two of the three attackers as "terrorists" from Pakistan waging a violent revolt in Muslim-majority Kashmir. Pakistan has denied any role and called for a neutral probe. Hindu-majority India accuses Islamic Pakistan of funding and encouraging militancy in Kashmir, the Himalayan region both nations claim in full but rule in part. Islamabad says it only provides moral and diplomatic support to a Kashmiri demand for self-determination. Tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors have increased since the attack, along with calls in India for action against Pakistan. Delhi and Islamabad have taken a raft of measures against each other since the Kashmir attack. India has suspended the Indus Waters Treaty – an important river-sharing pact. Pakistan has closed its airspace to Indian airlines.—APP

UK govt sent police details to Israeli embassy amid Gaza protest probe

LONDON: The UK government sent the contact details of counterterrorism officials to the Israeli Embassy amid an investigation into a pro-Palestine demonstration, The Guardian reported on Tuesday. This has raised concerns about foreign interference in the UK's justice system, with legal experts questioning the involvement of Israeli officials in a British legal matter. On Sept. 9 last year, an email was sent by the Attorney General's Office to Israeli Deputy Ambassador to the UK Daniela Grudsky Ekstein. The email carried the subject line "CPS/S015 (Crown Prosecution Service/counterterrorism police) contact details." It followed the arrest, under the UK's Terrorism Act, of 10 Palestine Action demonstrators a month earlier. The demonstrators were arrested after protesting at an Israeli weapons factory based in the UK, with a further eight being arrested in November in relation to the same incident. The email was sent by Nicola Smith, the AGO's head of international law. It was obtained through a Freedom of Information request by The Guardian and came 11 days after Smith had met Grudsky Ekstein on Aug. 28. Aside from the subject line, the content of the email was redacted. Minutes of the meeting between the two officials are available but heavily redacted.—APP

Grand Egyptian Museum CEO thanks Japan for its coop

TOKYO: Dr. Ahmed Ghoneim, CEO of the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo, paid a courtesy call on Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Matsumoto Hisashi on Friday to thank the Japanese government for its cooperation in financing the museum and to look forward to its opening in July, Japan's Foreign Ministry reported. Japan is providing financial cooperation in the form of yen loans totaling 84.247 billion yen (\$585 million) for the construction of the museum, as well as technical cooperation aimed at preserving and restoring artifacts at the adjacent conservation and restoration center.—APP

PAFST launched to strengthen National Food Security and Climate Resilience

ISLAMABAD: Senior government officials, development partners, researchers, and representatives from the private sector gathered on Tuesday for a closed-door consultation marking the inception of the Pakistan Alliance for Food Systems Transformation (PAFST). The consultation was organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), said a press release. PAFST is launched to deliberate on food systems transformation in alignment with national, regional and international policies. It brought together key stakeholders to support policy reforms, promote climate-smart agriculture, and improve access to affordable and nutritious food. Further, the event discussed competing political interests and demands, limited budgets, and tight timelines to strengthen food systems. The Alliance will also work to strengthen Pakistan's voice in global food systems discussions, including those under the UN Food Systems Summit and climate negotiations. The platform will be steered by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, with SDPI serving as the secretariat and GAIN providing advisory support. The Alliance will focus on evidence-based policymaking, market system improvements, climate resilience, and knowledge sharing, with a special emphasis on youth, women, and farmers. Speaking at the consultation, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, said, "Food security is not just about hunger; it is about economic stability, resilience to climate change, and national security. Through PAFST, we are bringing together expertise and commitment from all sectors to drive real change. Our goal is to build a food system that is sustainable, inclusive, and capable of withstanding future challenges." Minister of State Malik Rasheed Ahmed Khan, Ministry of National Food Security & Research stated, multisectoral approach is needed to enhance productivity, adopt water-smart solutions, and strengthen the resilience of our food systems".—DNA

Lebanon for Syria sanctions to be lifted to facilitate refugee return

DUBAI: Lebanese President Joseph Aoun on Tuesday urged the international community to lift sanctions on Syria. This would revitalize Syria's economy and create the necessary conditions for the return of displaced Syrians to their home country, he said. In a meeting with a delegation from the Middle East Institute in Washington, led by retired US Gen. Joseph Votel, Aoun said that Lebanon has reached its limit in hosting the large number of displaced people residing in the country. He added that the political and security conditions that once justified the presence of displaced people in Lebanon have significantly changed, making their return both possible and essential. "We are committed to the return of these displaced persons to their country," Aoun said, adding that many now remain in Lebanon purely as "economic migrants." He described the return of refugees as a humanitarian necessity and crucial for Lebanon's long-term stability. The Lebanese president said that removing sanctions on Syria would revitalize the country's economy and create the necessary conditions for Syrian refugees to return. This would help alleviate the pressures Lebanon faces, both economically and in terms of its strained infrastructure and resources, he said. Aoun also called on Washington to support Lebanon's security institutions, particularly the army, which he described as urgently needing assistance to maintain national stability and carry out its responsibilities under UN Resolution 1701. On the broader issue of Lebanon's economic recovery, Aoun discussed the reforms being carried out in the country. Lebanon's political unity and the consistent implementation of reforms are critical for restoring the country's economic and financial health, he said. "We must remain focused on the reform process, as only through internal unity and consistent progress will we be able to gain back the trust of the international community, and attract much-needed support," Aoun added.—Agencies

HRs attacks accelerated by Trump 2nd term: Amnesty

Finally, the report highlighted an "urgent need" for governments to do more to regulate AI technologies to safeguard human rights. It warned also that a growing number of governments were abusing spyware and other surveillance tools against opponent

LONDON: The global system of law and human rights is under threat from a "multiplicity of assaults" which have accelerated since US President Donald Trump's return to power, Amnesty International said Tuesday in its annual report. "Unprecedented forces are hunting down the ideals of human rights for all, seeking to destroy an international system forged in the blood and grief of World War Two and its Holocaust," said the rights group's Secretary General Agnes Callamard. The lives of millions of people had been "devastated" in 2024 as a result of conflicts and abuses committed in the Middle East, Sudan, Ukraine and Afghanistan where women's freedoms continue to be curtailed. The report singled out some of the world's biggest powers such as the US, Russia and China for "undermining" the achievements of international law, as well as the fight against poverty and discrimination. While these "reckless and punishing offensives" had been underway for several years, according to Amnesty, Trump had served as a "super-accelerator" of those trends. The new administration has frozen US international aid and reduced its funding to several UN organizations. The start of Trump's second term had been marked by a "multiplicity of assaults — against human rights accountability, against international law, and against the UN," Callamard said, calling for "concerted resistance." "While international justice mechanisms have taken important steps toward accountability in some cases, powerful governments have repeatedly blocked attempts to take meaningful action to end atrocities," Amnesty said. In particular, it took aim at countries that had challenged decisions by the International Court of Justice in The Hague against Israel, following a complaint of "genocide" against the Palestinians in Gaza filed by South Africa. Others, like Hungary, were criticized for refusing to enforce arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court against several Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The year would be remembered for how "Israel's military occupation grew ever more brazen and deadly" and how "the USA, Germany and a handful of other European states supported Israel," the report added. Amnesty accused Israel of committing a "live-streamed genocide" against Palestinians in Gaza by forcibly displacing most of the population and deliberately creating a humanitarian catastrophe. It said Israel had acted with "specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, thus committing genocide." Israel has repeatedly denied such charges. The war in Gaza began on October 7, 2023 with an unprecedented attack on Israel by Hamas militants from Gaza resulting in the deaths of 1,218 people in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP report based on official Israeli data. Hamas also kidnapped 251 people, 58 of whom remain in the hands of the Islamist group, although the Israeli military says 34 are dead. In response, Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas and is conducting a military offensive that has left more than 52,000 dead, mostly civilians, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory. In December, Amnesty condemned the ongoing "genocide" in Gaza, an accusation since echoed by other NGOs such as HRW and Doctors Without Borders, but strongly rejected by Israel. Amnesty also highlighted the suffering in Sudan from famine and a conflict between the regular army and the RSF paramilitaries. The conflict had led to the "largest forced displacement crisis in the world" today, uprooting some 12 million people but had been met with "near-complete global indifference," Amnesty said. On another front, the rights body said violence and discrimination against women had "soared" in 2024, both in conflicts, such as in Sudan, and in Afghanistan. Women in the south Asian country are subject to draconian legislation restricting their freedoms under the Taliban. Finally, the report highlighted an "urgent need" for governments to do more to regulate AI technologies to safeguard human rights. It warned also that a growing number of governments were abusing spyware and other surveillance tools against opponents.—DNA

PIA ensuring hassle-free immigration, smooth flights for Hajj pilgrims

He said the national carrier has officially commenced its Hajj flight operations with the departure of the first special flight, from Islamabad to Medina, adding, the flight, carrying 427 passengers, reached its destination smoothly, marking a successful start to PIA's Hajj services

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PIA Spokesperson Abdullah Khan Tuesday announced that under the 'Road to Makkah' initiative, government is providing smooth flights for pilgrims with enhanced facilities and dedicated immigration counters which have been established, allowing pilgrims to benefit from a

hassle-free experience, eliminating the 4-5 hour wait previously faced at Saudi immigration counters. In an exclusive interview, a PIA spokesperson said that Pakistan International Airlines promises hassle-free immigration for hajj pilgrims this year. The spokesperson highlighted that efficient immigration counters are being set up to ensure a smooth journey for pilgrims, enhancing

their overall hajj experience. He said the national carrier has officially commenced its Hajj flight operations with the departure of the first special flight, from Islamabad to Medina, adding, the flight, carrying 427 passengers, reached its destination smoothly, marking a successful start to PIA's Hajj services. The PIA spokesperson added that along with the pilgrims, tons of medicine

were also being transported on the flight to ensure the health and well-being of the pilgrims during their journey. He further stated that PIA is operating direct flights to Medina from six station cities in Pakistan, providing convenient travel options for pilgrims from various regions. Abdullah Khan also advised pilgrims to carefully review their travel documents and avoid carry-

ing prohibited items that may cause inconvenience during their journey. He emphasized the importance of adhering to guidelines and regulations to ensure a smooth travel experience. The PIA spokesperson also urged pilgrims to maintain their dignity and refrain from engaging in any behavior that could tarnish their reputation or cause inconvenience during the holy journey.

Briefs

Sindh
lawyers end
sit-ins except
in Baberlo

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Lawyers in Sindh announced on Tuesday that they are ending all ongoing sit-ins across the province, except for the Baberlo Bypass protest in Khairpur, after the Council of Common Interests (CCI) rejected the controversial new canals project from the Indus River. Following the CCI decision, celebrations broke out at the Baberlo Bypass sit-in, where protests had entered their 12th day. Protesters termed the CCI's rejection of the canal project a major victory for Sindh's unity and resistance. The All Sindh Lawyers Action Committee confirmed that court strikes would officially end from April 30 and that sit-ins in locations such as Karachi, Kandhkot, Ghotki, and other districts had concluded. However, the Baberlo sit-in will continue for now as several additional demands remain unresolved. Lawyer leader Sarfraz Metlo stated that the action committee would hold talks with Sindh government officials in Sukkur to push for further demands, including the abolition of corporate farming, withdrawal of cases against protesting lawyers, and return of seized vehicles. A decision regarding the Baberlo sit-in will be made after these negotiations. Karachi Bar Association President Aamir Nawaz Warraich said that while the Baberlo protest persists, it is no longer disrupting traffic flow.

NA speaker
lauds
PM, CCI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has expressed satisfaction over the decisions made by the Council of Common Interests (CCI) regarding canal projects and other inter-provincial matters, praising Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the provincial chief ministers for their leadership in reaching national consensus. In his statement, the Speaker said that the unanimous decisions from the CCI platform would further strengthen the federation, adding that Pakistan's political and national leadership had always prioritised national interest. He emphasised that dialogue was the only way forward and commended the maturity demonstrated by all sides. "I hope the ongoing protests regarding canal projects will now come to an end," he remarked, referring to recent demonstrations by lawyers and activists in Sindh. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq further stated that the CCI has sent a powerful message of unity to adversaries, noting that any aggression by India would be met with strong national resolve. "The entire nation stands as a solid wall in defense of our homeland," he affirmed.

KSA slams
Israel's
actions in
Gaza at ICJ

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia condemned Israel's ongoing military campaign in Gaza at the International Court of Justice on Tuesday, accusing it of defying international rulings and committing severe human rights violations. Speaking before the court, the Kingdom's representative, Mohamed Saud Alnasser, said Israel "continues to ignore the court's orders," and insisted that "there is no justification for Israel's violations in Gaza." Alnasser added that "Israel has turned Gaza into a pile of rubble," highlighting the widespread devastation and suffering inflicted on civilians. His remarks came on the second day of the ICJ's hearings into Israel's humanitarian obligations toward Palestinians, held amid a total Israeli blockade on aid to the Gaza Strip that has lasted over 50 days. The hearings are a part of broader efforts to assess whether Israel has complied with international legal responsibilities in its conduct during the war on Gaza. — Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors Spain, Brazil, Ireland, Argentina and Italy attending the condolence reference of Pope Francis, at the Fatima Church in the Federal Capital. — DNA

WB approves \$108 million
financing for KP projects

Rural Accessibility project is worth \$78 million and Tourism Development project is estimated at \$30 million

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has approved \$108 million in additional financing to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Accessibility Project (KPRAP) and to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated Tourism Development Project (KITE) project. The KPRAP project is worth \$78 million and KITE project is estimated at \$30 million. The financial grant has been approved to enable both projects to achieve their objectives in improving access to health and education services, markets and jobs, in a way that strengthens resilience to natural disasters in the province, the World Bank said in a handout. "By rehabilitating critical rural road

infrastructure and enhancing disaster preparedness, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Accessibility Project and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated Tourism Development Project are not only improving access to essential services like health and education, but also fostering climate, economic resilience and creating job opportunities for local communities," said Najy Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. The \$78 million in additional financing for the KPRAP will focus on providing safe and climate resilient road infrastructure, by upgrading and rehabilitating rural roads, thereby improving access to services including schools, health facilities, and markets. The project is also supporting safe

and affordable transport to school for girls. Overall, around 1.76 million people are expected to benefit from the project. "This additional financing underscores the World Bank's commitment to supporting Pakistan's and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province's development goals," said Muhammad Bilal Paracha, Task Team Leader for the project. "The project is crucial for improving the lives of people in the province, particularly women and girls, by enhancing [their] access to essential services and economic opportunities." The \$30 million in additional financing for the KITE will help enhance the province's tourism sector by completing the rehabilitation of two roads that will improve access to the province's pristine tourist spots in the vicinity.

It will also support technical assistance and capacity building for the tourism industry and public sector stakeholders. The additional financing will support better destination management, heritage conservation, and the integration of digital platforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tourism industry. "The KITE project is encouraging responsible tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with public and private sector stakeholders," said Kiran Afzal, Task Team Leader for the project. "This means better roads, improved tourist facilities, and more opportunities for local communities to benefit from the growth of the tourism economy. The project will create jobs, train local people, and preserve the country's rich cultural heritage."

Mohsin Naqvi calls on JUI-F chief
to discuss rising India-Pak tensions

Naqvi inquired about Fazl's well-being and expressed good wishes for his health

DNA

LAHORE: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held an important meeting with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman here in Lahore on Tuesday, during which matters of mutual interest, rising Pakistan-India tensions, and the Palestine issue were discussed. Naqvi took Fazl into confidence regarding Pakistan's principled stance and decisions in response to India's illogical and unilateral actions.

The interior minister also briefed the JUI-F chief on the decisions made by the National Security Committee (NSC). On this occasion, Naqvi inquired about Fazl's well-being and expressed good wishes for his health. During the discussion, Fazl stated that "Modi is an enemy of Muslims; wherever there is a front against Islam and Muslims, Modi will stand there." Naqvi remarked that "India is trying to play with fire, and Pakistan will respond with full force to any misadventure."

YDA activists booked under
terror charges for violence

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Two police stations in Lahore have registered cases against leaders of the Grand Health Alliance (GHA) over clashes with police, jeopardising security in high-security zone and creating public nuisance. The cases have been instituted under several sections, including those related to terror

ism. The Civil Lines police registered a case against more than 300 protesters, including Dr Shoaib Niazi and seven other Young Doctors Association office-bearers. The Race-course police registered a case under terrorism and other charges against Dr Shoaib and other YDA representatives. The young doctors and paramedics have been protesting against government's decision to "privatise health facilities" for almost a month.

Canada should 'never forget'
US betrayal; old relations 'over'

The Liberal Party secured a victory in Canada's election, but fell short of the majority government Carney had hoped for, winning 167 seats -- still short of the 172 needed to govern without support from smaller parties

FOREIGN DESK

OTTAWA: Canada's newly-elected Prime Minister Mark Carney has delivered a strong message to the United States, stating that Ottawa should "never forget the lessons" of Washington's "betrayal" that has adversely affected the two countries' trade ties. Carney made the remarks on Tuesday after his Liberal Party won control of the parliament amidst growing tensions with US President Donald Trump's administration over trade policies. "We will win this trade war," Carney told cheering supporters in Ottawa, warning of "challenging" days ahead due to Trump's tariffs and annexation threats. "We are over the shock of the American betrayal, but we should never forget the lessons," Carney said. The Liberal Party secured a victory in Canada's election, but fell short of the majority government Carney had hoped for, winning 167 seats -- still short of the 172 needed to govern without support from smaller parties. The Conservative Party followed with 145 seats, with votes still being counted. Carney made it clear in his victory speech that the traditional relationship between Canada and the US had

changed. "Our old relationship with the United States, a relationship based on steadily increasing integration, is over," he said. "The system of open global trade anchored by the United States, a system that Canada has relied on since the Second World War, is over," he again asserted. "These are tragedies, but it's also our new reality," Carney added, acknowledging the hard road ahead, which he says would require sacrifices from Canadians. Tensions between the countries have been escalating, especially after the US imposed a 25% tariff on Canadian-made automobiles. US tariffs, particularly the increase that has affected Canadian-made cars, have significantly impacted Canada's economy, with many inside the country seeing these actions as an affront to their nation's sovereignty. VCarney's victory is, among other things, attributed to the fallout from Trump's aggressive trade measures, which have become a major issue in the Canadian election. The tariffs, especially on aluminum and steel, sparked a wave of patriotism, leading to a shift in voter sentiment. Many Canadians, especially those in smaller parties such as the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the separatist Bloc Quebecois, rallied behind Carney's leadership as the prime minister with the strength to handle Trump's trade war.

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