



# Islamabad POST

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## Chairman Senate Gillani vows to deepen bilateral relations with Qatar

Detailed News On Page-08

## Shared global responsibility can tackle afghan crisis

Detailed News On Page-08



## Babar opens up about his future in T20

Detailed News On Page-06



### ‘All preparations completed’

# ‘We will respond very strongly’: Pak warns India

South Asia under serious threat due to India's “politically motivated, provocative actions, says DPM

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday warned India against any misadventure, stating that while Pakistan will not initiate any escalation move, it will respond decisively to any provocation. The minister's remarks come amidst heightened tensions following the Pahalgam attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), which Dar described as part of India's politically motivated and provocative actions threatening regional peace and stability. Addressing a press briefing alongside Director-General (DG) Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, Dar underscored Pakistan's grave concerns over India's destabilising actions and inflammatory statements following the April 22 attack. He said that while Pakistan strongly condemns the targeting of innocent civilians, it was crucial to recognise that the country, having suffered immensely from terrorism, understands the pain of those affected.

“As a victim of terrorism, no one can feel the pain of those impacted better than Pakistan,” Dar stated, adding that Pakistan had expressed its condolences and engaged with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to ensure the strongest condemnation of the Pahalgam incident. Dar further criticised India for attempting to associate Pakistan with the attack without evidence, calling it a “deliberate and baseless” effort to distract the global community from India's own security failures in IIOJK and its ongoing oppression of Kashmiris. “India continues to glorify its assassination campaigns and state-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan and beyond,” Dar said, highlighting the substantial sacrifices Pakistan has made in the fight against terrorism, including over 80,000 lives lost and economic damages exceeding \$150 billion.

Continued on Page 06

## Shehbaz briefs Rubio about Indian designs

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif received a telephone call from U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio this evening. The Prime Minister greeted the U.S. Secretary of State and conveyed his good wishes for President Donald Trump, while expressing Pakistan's desire to work closely with the U.S. Administration on all areas of mutual interest. During the telephone call, the Prime Minister shared with Secretary Rubio, Pakistan's perspective on recent developments in South Asia, since the Pahalgam incident. While condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, the Prime Minister underscored Pakistan's leading role in the war against terror and its sacrifice of over 90,000 lives lost and over USD 152 billion in economic losses. Terming India's escalatory and provocative behavior as deeply disappointing and worrisome, the Prime Minister said that India's provocations would only serve to distract Pakistan from its ongoing efforts to defeat terrorism, particularly from militant groups including ISKP, TTP and BLA operating from Afghan soil. He categorically rejected Indian attempts to link Pakistan to the incident and pointed to his call for a transparent, credible, and neutral investigation to bring out the facts.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Secretary General Digital Cooperation Organization Deemah Al Yahya calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

## LoC: Army destroys Indian checkpoint

Indian troops breached ceasefire agreement by resorting to unprovoked small arms fire, say sources

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

RAWALPINDI: Amid ongoing tensions between the nuclear-armed arch-rivals over the deadly Pahalgam attack, Pakistan security forces delivered a robust response to India's unprovoked ceasefire violation along the Line of Control (LoC), military sources said on Wednesday. Pakistan security forces destroyed an Indian checkpoint after late-night aggression on April 29-30. According to security officials, Indian troops breached the ceasefire agreement by resorting to unprovoked small arms fire in the Ki-ani and Mandal sectors.

Continued on Page 06

## Pakistan Army war exercises continue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Army's war exercises continue in the wake of the Indian false flag Pahalgam attack. Sources said that both light and heavy modern weaponry – including tanks, artillery, and infantry units are participating in the exercises. The military exercises are being conducted in Sialkot, Narowal, Zafarwal, Shakargarh, and other areas, sources revealed. The Pakistan Armed Forces remain resolute in defending the motherland

Continued on Page 06

## PM meets global tech leaders

# Govt taking steps to align with global digital transformation

He said the government's business-friendly policies and provision of investor-friendly facilities are aimed at attracting capital as well as the transfer of modern technology to the country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the government is taking every possible step to align Pakistan with the digital transformation taking place globally. He was talking to Secretary General of the Digital Cooperation Organization, Deemah AlYahya, who called on him in Islamabad on Wednesday. The Prime Minister said the gathering of over one thousand cutting-edge technology investors and policymakers from around the world in Pakistan is a testament of Pakistan's growing influence in the digital sector across the region. He said Pakistan's most valuable asset are our young workforce, and it is among our foremost priorities to equip them with digital skills and training. Shehbaz Sharif said the economy of Pakistan, which consists of two hundred forty million people, is the most suitable market in the region for digital startups and

Continued on Page 06

## Pakistan capable of driving economic growth

The prime minister said that the government would prioritize engaging Pakistani investor community in IT and reforms process in other sectors

IKRAM ULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the people of Pakistan were capable of playing a central role in the development of the country as well as the global economy, recognising the existing contribution of Pakistan's business and IT companies at global stage. The prime minister, chairing a meeting regarding

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### Gilgit, Skardu flights cancelled

Air traffic control monitoring all flight movements, including foreign airlines transiting through Pakistani airspace

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan has intensified monitoring of its airspace amid heightened security concerns over potential Indian aggression, aviation sources said on Wednesday. Air traffic control authorities have issued new directives to monitor all flight movements, including foreign airlines transiting through Pakistani airspace, Express News reported. Sources said particular attention is being paid to flights arriving from India or operated by Indian carriers. Monitoring of suspicious aircraft has been enhanced, and clearance for any such flights will now require high-level approval. For security reasons, all commercial flights scheduled to operate to and from Gilgit and Skardu on Wednesday have been cancelled.

### OGRA cuts LPG prices for May

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has reduced the price of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for May 2025, following a decline in international market rates. According to an official notification, the price of an 11.8 kg domestic LPG cylinder has been reduced by Rs. 37.80, bringing it down from Rs. 2,930.71 in April to Rs. 2,892.91. The price cut comes in response to a 1.8 percent decrease in the Saudi Aramco Contract Price (CP), which is used as a benchmark for local LPG pricing. However, a slight increase of 0.22 percent in the average US dollar exchange rate partially offset the overall reduction.

## Imran slams ‘dangerous ambitions’

# Stand firmly as one nation against Modi's aggression

“Instead of introspection and investigation, Modi sarkar is again placing blame on Pakistan,” says ex-PM

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has said that though the country faced division on some issues, it stood united firmly against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aggression and war-mongering against Pakistan. The News reported on Wednesday. “While we reject this fake regime, we stand firmly as one Pakistani nation and strongly condemn Modi's war-mongering and his dangerous ambitions that threaten regional peace”, Khan said while speaking to the lawyers at Rawalpindi's Adial jail as per a post on his X account. The former prime minister's remarks come against the backdrop of simmering tensions between the two nuclear army neighbours following the attack on tourists in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir's (IIOJK) Pahalgam which led to the deaths of over two dozen tourists. Since then, New Delhi has not only downgraded its diplomatic ties with Islamabad, but has also suspended the Indus Waters Treaty with

Continued on Page 06

## Pakistan peaceful but ready to respond

He reiterated that Imran Khan maintained his stance of unwavering loyalty to Pak

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speaking to the media outside the Islamabad High Court, Barrister Ali Zafar asserted that Pakistan is a peace-loving and responsible nation but will deliver a strong response if attacked. He reiterated that the former prime minister, Imran Khan, maintained his stance of unwavering loyalty to Pakistan, stating that “if the nation is attacked, we are ready to sacrifice our lives.” Commenting on regional tensions, Senator Ali Zafar criticised

Continued on Page 06

# NAB unearths Rs 40 billion scam in KP government contracts

## Anti-graft watchdog finds dumper driver's bank accounts holding approximately Rs 4.5 billion

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has unearthed a whopping Rs40 billion scam in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's accounts concerning misappropriation of funds. As the staggering amount continues to rise as investigations unfold, the ongoing investigations have led the authorities to freeze nearly 50 bank accounts and seize records from various government departments and financial institutions. During the probe, a startling revelation emerged as a dumper driver's bank accounts were found holding approximately Rs4.5 billion, which was immediately frozen by NAB. The driver had set up a fake construction company. Evidence revealed that a total of nearly Rs7 billion had been deposited into his accounts through suspicious transactions. Initial investigations also uncovered the issuance of nearly 1,000 fake cheques from the district's government accounts, with 50 account holders identified so far. Evidence increasingly points to the involvement of influential political figures and senior government officials at the provincial level. Sources said the inquiry began after the NAB Chairman received credible

Continued on Page 06

## Power tariff likely to rise in summer months

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The end power consumers are most likely to experience a hike in the rates, mainly in the head of Fuel Cost Adjustment (FCA) while the government is going to provide relief in electricity tariff by Rs7.41 per unit in May. Due to lower water level in Tarbela and Mangla dams and dysfunctional Neelum-Jhelum project causing more reliance on costly thermal power generation, the likely hike in electricity rates is mainly because of less hydro generation in summer months. This has been communicated by General Manager of National Power Control Centre (NPCC) during a public hearing here Tuesday on the FCA on the request submitted by Discos for March 2025. The NPCC warned of expected hike in electricity rates during summer months due to reduced hydropower generation and increased reliance on expensive fuels.

Continued on Page 06

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# 48 tourist destinations out of 87 closed in IIOJK

In the meantime, the passenger traffic at Srinagar International Airport has witnessed a steep decline following the Pahalgam alleged attack, the report said

## DNA

MIRPUR (AJK):In Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK), the state's puppet Government has closed 48 tourist destinations for tourists across Kashmir valley out of 87 destinations while the number of arrivals at Srinagar airport witness steep decline and raids on suspected houses continued for the second week, a report has said released to media here from across the line of control. The destinations which have been closed are: Yousmarg, Tousimaidan, Doodpathri, Aharbal, Kousarnag, Bangus, Kariwan Diver Chandigam, Bangus Valley, Wular/Watlab, Rampora and Rajpora, Cheharhar, Mundij-Hamam-Markoot Waterfall, Khampoo, Bosnia, Vijitop, Sun Temple, Verinag Garden, Sinthan Top, Margantop, Akad Park, Habba Khatoon Point, Babareshi, Ringawali, Gogaldara, Baderkote, Shrunz Waterfall, Kamanpost, Namban Waterfall, Eco Park Khadnyar, Sangarwani, Jamia Masjid, Badamwari, Rajori Kad-

al Hotel Kanaaz, Aali Kadal JJ Food Restaurant, IVORY Hotel, Padshapal resorts and restaurant, Cherry tree resort (Faqr Gujri), North cliff cafe and retreat by Stay Pattern, Forest hill cottage, Eco village resort (Dara), Astanmarg View Point, Astanmarg Paragliding, Mamneth and Mahadev Hills, Buddhist Monastery, Dachigam - Beyond Trout Farm / Fisheries Farm, Astanpora (especially Qayam Gah resort, Lachpatri, Hung Park and Naranag, according to the report. The other destinations were within exceptional security cover and another report said that some of these destinations had been closed temporarily. In the meantime, the passenger traffic at Srinagar International Airport has witnessed a steep decline following the Pahalgam alleged attack, the report said. The number of passengers travelling through Srinagar Airport fell noticeably over the past few days, beginning April 23, it said. On April 23, a total of 17,653 passengers reportedly travelled through the airport across 112 flights with 6,561 arrivals and

11,092 departures. On April 24, the airport handled 15,836 passengers on 118 flights, including 4,456 arrivals and 11,380 departures. On April 25, with 14,041 passengers travelling on 100 scheduled flights, in addition to a few additional flights that carried minimal numbers-24 arrivals and 794 departures on four extra flights. On April 26, Srinagar Airport witnessed 14,783 passengers travelling through 106 scheduled flights, with an additional three flights carrying 28 arriving and 351 departing passengers, the report revealed. While flight operations have remained largely unaffected in terms of the number of flights, the load factor (passenger occupancy) has fallen, according to the report. Srinagar Police continued searches across multiple locations in the city with the aim to dismantle freedom-mongering Kashmiris' residential infrastructure in the "capital" district, said the report. They raided the residences of 34 suspects across Srinagar with so far house searches across the Kashmir valley crossing 1000.



ISLAMABAD: Farmers are busy in wheat threshing in field at Golra Sharif area of the Federal Capital.

## Efforts afoot for welfare of workers: Bugti

QUETTA:Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Wednesday said that the Balochistan government is taking concrete steps for the welfare of the workers. In his message on the occasion of Labor Day, he said that first May is a day of recognition of the rights, honor and sacrifices of workers, this day reminds us that a prosperous and developed society could be established only when the working class is given respect, protection and equal opportunities. He said that the ongoing steps for the welfare of the workers and their children in the province are yielding positive results saying that for the first time in the history of Balochistan, it has been possible that the children of workers are being given opportunities to study in the country's higher educational institutions and today a child of a worker is studying in the same institution, where the child of a respected person studies, which is a practical example of equality and justice. The Chief Minister said that the current government is ensuring the provision of employment, health, education and social security for the working class, we, as a nation, have to work collectively to protect the rights of these workers and solve their problems. He paid tribute to all the workers and said that thanks to their hard work day and night, Balochistan and Pakistan are being progressed.

## Graduation ceremony of 300 Afghan students held

ISLAMABAD:A graduation ceremony for 300 Afghan students under HEC's 'Allama Muhammad Iqbal 3000 Scholarships to Afghan Students (Prime Minister's Directive) - Phase II' was held at the Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences), Peshawar Distinguished guests included Dr. Jamil Ahmad, Member (IT) HEC, Ambassador (R) Mohammad Sadiq, PM's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Mohibullah Hafiz, Consul General, Afghan Consulate, Peshawar, Engr. Muhammad Raza Chohan, Adviser (HRD) HEC, Mr. Zeeshan Khan, Project Director (HRD) HEC and Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani, Director, IM Sciences, said a press release on Wednesday.

Dr. Usman Ghani delivered the welcome address, congratulating the graduates and encouraging them to embrace their future roles with a sense of belonging. Engr. Muhammad Raza Chohan, Adviser HRD, HEC, presented an overview of Phase-II of the scholarship project, approved in 2018 with a capital cost of Rs. 7.3 billion, running through 2027. He highlighted its socio-economic impact on 3,000 Afghan students, their families and communities thereby creating a lasting impact through higher education. Congratulating the 300 graduates, he emphasized the importance of inclusive participation, particularly the role of Afghan women in promoting literacy, human resource

development, and economic progress. He also noted the project's provision for short-term training of Afghan faculty and officials, aligns it with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Ambassador (R) Mohammad Sadiq, while addressing the ceremony, expressed pride at the graduates' achievements, calling it a new beginning in their lives. He praised Pakistan's generosity in continuing the scholarship initiative despite economic challenges, strengthening goodwill and people-to-people ties. Emphasizing that peace in Afghanistan is vital for peace in Pakistan, he highlighted the continued importance of capacity building of Afghan universities.—APP

## Indian baseless allegations exposed: Azma

LAHORE:Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari said the incident in Pahalgam, despite the presence of seven lakh troops in Occupied Kashmir, serves as a glaring proof of the Modi government's failure. She pointed out that every allegation by India, from Afzal Guru to Pahalgam, has been exposed, with India unable to provide any evidence. Bukhari criticized India for creating a false narrative against Pakistan, citing incidents such as the Samjhota Express, Pathankot and Pulwama attacks, where India failed to present any evidence. She added that several Indian Army generals had admitted that many of India's attacks were self-fabricated and false. "Pakistan's nation and armed forces remain strong and resolute," Bukhari said. Referring to recent developments, Bukhari revealed that Indian military exercises were canceled after Pakistani Shaheens (fighter jets) took to the skies, prompting India to change its plans. During a press conference at the Directorate General of Public Relations (DGPR), Bukhari discussed Lahore's recent achievement on the global stage, where it was recognized as one of the safest cities in the world. She noted that Lahore was now rated cleaner than New York and Sydney, and that once the remaining parts of the Safe City Project are completed by June, all of Punjab would become one of the safest regions. According to the Numbeo Crime and Safety Index, crime rates in Lahore have decreased by 50%, with serious crimes such as robbery and murder falling by 64%. "These are not government claims but results of internationally recognized data," Bukhari added. She said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had congratulated the Lahore police for the success and reiterated the commitment to maintain law and order.—APP

## Nowshera to have safari park: CM KP

Ali Amin Gandapu denounces speculation over minerals bill, affirms no compromise on provincial autonomy

PESHAWAR: Under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, a key meeting of the Forestry and Environment Department on Wednesday gave principal approval for establishing a modern safari park in Nowshera district. The park would span 560 acres—twice the size of Lahore Safari Park—and would be located on government land in Misri Banda, identified as the most suitable site. With an estimated cost of Rs 3.5 billion, the project was expected to be completed within three years. It would be included in the upcoming Annual Development Program (ADP). The proposed safari park aimed to boost tourism, recreation, eco-tourism, employment, and environmental conservation. Planned features included a botanical garden, bird enclosure, natural history museum, and cultural village. The

park was projected to generate annual revenue of Rs 360 million. CM Gandapur emphasized that the project must be environmentally friendly, with minimal grey infrastructure. He also directed authorities to consider various implementation models, including public-private partnerships. Moreover, Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, on Wednesday strongly rejected the ongoing political speculation surrounding the proposed Minerals Bill, asserting that there would be no compromise on provincial autonomy. CM Gandapur emphasized that the bill does not contain any clauses that transfer provincial powers to any federal body or institution. "The speculation circulating on social media is completely baseless and contrary to the actual content of the bill," he stated. He condemned what he

called unfounded propaganda and clarified that the draft law explicitly ensures that neither the federal government nor the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was being granted any authority over the province's mineral resources. Gandapur urged critics to read the bill themselves or consult legal experts if needed, rather than formulating narratives without proper understanding. "This kind of uninformed political discourse is inappropriate," he added. Highlighting the performance of the current system, he noted that the province had seen a revenue increase of Rs. 3.5 billion in the mines and minerals sector. He also assured that if necessary, the government was open to making amendments to the bill, but stressed again that provincial rights will be fully protected.

## ISSI commemorates 70th anniversary of Bandung conference

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a special seminar to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the historic Bandung Conference, titled "The Bandung Spirit (1955-2025): Seven Decades of Solidarity, Sovereignty, and South-South Cooperation." Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The distinguished panel included Ambassador Zamir Akram, Pakistan's former Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva; Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director of COMSATS; Mr. Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Indonesia in Pakistan; and Dr. Salma Malik, Associate Professor, Department of Defence and Strategic Studies (DSS) In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood underscored Pakistan's key role in the 1955 Bandung Conference and highlighted the significance of the 'Bandung Spirit' based on solidarity, sovereignty, peaceful coexistence, and South-South cooperation. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood recalled that the Bandung Conference was preceded by the enunciation of "five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence"—mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence—which were articulated with primary role of the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. He added that the leaders at the Bandung Conference through their 10-point Declaration presented an alternative, non-Western vision of international relations—one that challenged the long-dominant Western paradigm. He maintained that strategic partnership with China and engagement with platforms like the SCO and BRI are evidence of Pakistan's commitment to the 'Bandung Spirit'. While acknowledging recent skepticism about Afro-Asian solidarity, he reaffirmed the growing relevance of the 'Global South' in shaping a more just and inclusive world order. He also emphasized the importance of practical cooperation to further strengthen mutual bonds and advance the agenda of peace and development. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed highlighted the profound historical significance of the Bandung Conference, which marked a pivotal moment in global politics, especially for the developing nations of Asia and Africa. He emphasized the importance of China's emergence in international diplomacy, under the leadership of Premier Zhou Enlai, who played a key role in shaping the conference's key principle of peaceful coexistence. He further stressed the lasting impact of Bandung in fostering solidarity among the Global South and its influence on global movements, including the African-American struggle for equality. He also underlined the enduring spirit of Bandung, which continues to inspire unity and cooperation in today's international relations.—DNA

## Role of ulema vital for country's defense, unity: Khabir

MULTAN:Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad said on Wednesday that Pakistan is a great blessing of Allah Almighty, established through the sacrifices of millions of people. Alongside the founders of Pakistan, religious scholars also played a significant role, and "today it is essential that we remember these sacrifices and contribute to the protection and progress of our beloved country". Addressing National Unity Conference in Multan, the Maulana said "the presence of scholars from all schools of thought in today's conference proves that the nation is united under the umbrella of national solidarity". He said: "Pakistan has come out of difficult times

and is now moving towards prosperity; stability has been achieved through tireless efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Army Chief." He said that Pakistan's "defence is in strong hands and it is our duty to strengthen it even more". He said when the enemies saw Pakistan advancing, they conspired against it, but by the grace of Allah, the nation remained united and defeated all hostile designs. Maulana Azad said that all terrorism incidents in Pakistan were orchestrated by India. He added that India repeatedly threatened Pakistan with water blockade and aggression, but the [Narendra] Modi government must remember that Pakistan is a nuclear power and its 250 million people are ready un-

der the leadership of their commander to give a strong response to any aggression. He said while Pakistan desired peace, if India dares to show aggression, the armed forces and the people of Pakistan would respond with full force. He stated that if the enemy would attack in 24 or 36 hours, Pakistan would retaliate in the same time-frame. The Maulana said that the Muslims of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) are yearning for freedom and that Pakistan stands with them in their struggle. He added that Pakistan's bond with Al-Quds, the people of Palestine, and Gaza is based on the faith of "La Ilaha Illallah," and that their pain is felt by every Pakistani.—APP

## KCFR hosts Russian CG for talk on the End of World War 11, Post-War World order

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Karachi Council on Foreign Relations (KCFR) hosted His Excellency Andrey Viktorovich Fedorov, Consul General of the Russian Federation in Karachi, for a thought-provoking session on the theme "End of World War II and the Post-War World Order." The event took place at Avari Towers and was attended by a large and diverse audience comprising diplomats, scholars, students, media personnel, and members of the business and strategic community. Ms Nadira Panjwani, Chairperson of KCFR, in her welcome remarks, appreciated

the Russian Federation's consistent diplomatic engagement with Pakistan and underscored the importance of platforms like KCFR in fostering dialogue and deeper understanding between nations. She also touched upon current global challenges and drew comparisons between past and present geopolitical dynamics. In his keynote address, Consul General Fedorov offered deep insights into the historical significance of World War II's conclusion and the far-reaching changes it triggered in the global power structure. He emphasised the critical role the Soviet Union played in defeating fascism and highlighted how the post-war order shaped modern-day

international relations, institutions, and alliances. He underlined the importance of diplomacy, mutual respect, and multilateralism in preserving global peace and security in today's multipolar world. The session was followed by a vibrant Q&A, during which audience members engaged the Consul General on issues ranging from Russia's current foreign policy to regional peace efforts in South Asia. KCFR remains committed to hosting influential voices from around the world to promote informed dialogue and constructive engagement on issues of national and international importance.

## SACM on Industries visits Haripur to review industrial development

PESHAWAR:Special Assistant to Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries, Abdul Karim Tordher paid a visit to District Haripur on Wednesday to assess ongoing industrial activities and engage with local stakeholders. During his visit, Abdul Karim Tordher visited the Ghazi Economic Zone where he reviewed operations and held meetings with industrialists to understand the challenges faced faced by them. Member of the Provincial Assembly Malik Adeel Iqbal also accompanied him during the visit. The Special Assistant also visited the Kalabat Small Industrial Estate for a comprehensive inspection. Officials from the Small Industries Development Board (SIDB), local MNAs and MPAs were also present during the visit. Speaking at the Ghazi Economic Zone, Tordher highlighted key infrastructure issues, including the need for an access road and a dedicated electricity feeder. He assured attendees that these concerns would be promptly raised with local legislators and district administration, and expressed confidence that they would be resolved soon.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

May 03/Poland National Day

May 06/Bulgaria Armed Forces Day

May 06/UAE Armed Forces Day

May 07/ Kazakhstan Armed Forces Day

May 08/Czech Republic National Day

May 09/European Union National Day

May 17/Norway Constitution Day

May 21/Hungary Armed Forced Day

May 22/Yemen Republic Re-unification Day(National Day )

May 24/Eritrea National Day

May 25/Lebanon Liberation and Resistance Day

May 25/Argentina National Day

May 25/Jordan Independence Day

May 28 /Azerbaijan Republic Day

May 28/Ethiopia National Day

May 31/Brunei Armed Forces Day

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.....1122

& Rescue Services.....4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.....9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489

CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

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

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# NUML boosts academic, research ties with Kazakh varsities

## These engagements underscore NUML’s mission to advance global cooperation in education and research and reaffirm its role as a bridge between nations through academic diplomacy

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD : The National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, has signed two significant international cooperation agreements with top universities of Kazakhstan, marking a strategic move to enhance academic collaboration, faculty exchange, and joint research initiatives. In a step toward global academic integration, NUML signed a Letter of Interest with Shokan Ualikhanov Kokshetau University, Kokshetau, Kazakhstan. This partnership aims to foster cooperation in the fields of education and science, focusing on the training of highly qualified specialists, faculty exchange, joint research, publication of educational materials, and the organization of academic conferences and seminars. The agreement was signed by Rector NUML, Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI (M) (ret'd) and Chairman of the Board-Rector of Sh. Ualikhanov Kokshetau University, M. K. Srylybayev. In another development, NUML also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, the premier academic institution of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This MoU covers a wide array of academic cooperation including faculty and student exchange, joint short- and long-term academic programs, collaborative research, joint participation in international grant projects, and publication of research outputs. The agreement was signed by Prof. Tuimebayev Zhanset, Chairman of the Board-Rector of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, and Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani, Rector NUML. Both agreements reflect NUML's unwavering commitment to promoting international academic collaboration, knowledge sharing, and intercultural engagement. These strategic alliances are expected to benefit faculty, researchers, and students by offering diverse opportunities for learning, teaching, and innovation on a global scale. Speaking on the occasion, Rector NUML, emphasized the importance of internationalization in higher education, stating, "Our partnerships with prestigious Kazakh institutions will open new horizons for academic excellence, cross-cultural dialogue, and collaborative research that can address regional and global challenges." These engagements underscore NUML's mission to advance global cooperation in education and research and reaffirm its role as a bridge between nations through academic diplomacy.

# Turkish envoy opens Anadolu creator lab at NUST

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Ambassador of Turkiye to Pakistan, Dr. Irfan Neziroglu on Wednesday inaugurated the 'Anadolu Creator Lab' at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), reaffirming Turkiye's commitment to strengthening academic and technological collaboration with Pakistan. The state-of-the-art facility, established within the National Science and Technology Park (NSTP), has been set up with the support of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). The lab is to foster innovation and interdisciplinary research in fields such as robotics, electronics, coding, algorithmic thinking, and design. Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Dr. Neziroglu underscored the strategic importance of the initiative. "The Anadolu Creator Lab represents a major step forward in our shared vision of technological advancement. It will empower students and researchers to innovate, prototype, and explore new frontiers in science and technology," he added. Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan, NUST Rector Dr. Muhammad Zahid Latif, and the Ambassador of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus were also present on the occasion, alongside students and faculty members. Highlighting TIKA's growing footprint in Pakistan's academic landscape, Dr. Neziroglu noted that the agency had completed several high-impact laboratory projects in the past year alone. These include quantum optics labs, high-tech media labs, and zoological diversity labs across top Pakistani universities, he maintained. He said, "These efforts reflect TIKA's dedication to empowering Pakistani youth and promoting scientific excellence. It is also a testament to the strong and historic ties between our two brotherly nations." Referring to the enduring bond between Turkiye and Pakistan, the ambassador described the bilateral relationship as one rooted in 'eternal brotherhood'. He said, "For 78 years, our relations have remained excellent and uninterrupted. We celebrate each other's successes, share each other's sorrows, and stand together in every challenge."

# NIRC to host historic Int’l Labour Day moot

ISLAMABAD:The National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC), in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), is set to host a landmark international conference on May 1 (tomorrow) in Islamabad in connection with International Labour Day 2025. The event, to be held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), is themed "Harmony with Change", aiming to promote dialogue and consultation on workers' rights, industrial harmony, and legislation aligned with international standards in Pakistan. This will be the first major national conference organized by the NIRC since 1969. The high-profile gathering will feature federal ministers, honourable judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, labour union leaders, industrialists, legal experts, and senior ILO representatives. The conference will be inaugurated and presided over by NIRC Chairman Justice (ret'd) Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui. Following his keynote address, renowned jurist Barrister Zafarullah Khan will speak on "Rights and Responsibilities of Employers and Workers in Islam". Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail of the Supreme Court will deliver a special address on "The Role of Pakistani Judiciary in Protecting Labour Rights." Several technical sessions will also be held during the conference. The first session, titled "Industrial Harmony and Social Dialogue", will be chaired by former Supreme Court Judge Justice (R) Khalilur Rehman Ramday. Panelists will include Muhammad Asim Khichi, Managing Director of Associated Press of Pakistan (APP); Tahir Yaqub Bhatti, President of Zarai Taraqiati Bank; Shoaib Adil, Additional Secretary of Pakistan Railways; Faisal Nisar Chaudhry, Managing Director of Utility Stores Corporation; Mir Ibrahim Rahman, CEO of Geo TV; and Siraj Hussain, Director at Unilever Pakistan. Labour union leaders will also take part in the panel discussion. The session will be moderated by Salman Mansoor Siddiqui, General Secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association. The second session, chaired by Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain, will focus on "Grievance Redressal Under the Industrial Relations Act 2012" and "Pakistan's Commitment to ILO Conventions." Advocate Imran Shafiq will join as a mediator, while labour expert Iftikhar Ahmed and Lahore High Court's Justice Jawad Hassan will present their perspectives. In the concluding session, Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar will deliver a speech on "Efforts to Align Existing Laws in Pakistan with International Labour Standards". ILO Pakistan Country Director Geir Tønstøl will deliver a keynote address on "The Future of Work." The conference will conclude with the presentation of honorary shields to distinguished guests, followed by a luncheon for all participants. Describing the event as a milestone for labour rights and industrial harmony, NIRC Chairman Justice (ret'd) Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui stated, "WE 2025 is not merely a slogan; it is a vision rooted in dialogue, respect, and partnership toward a better future."

# Nine held, dairy farms sealed over dengue violations

ISLAMABAD:In a drive to control the spread of dengue, the district administration has arrested nine individuals and sealed multiple sites found responsible for breeding dengue larvae. According to the spokesman of ICT administration, this action is part of an ongoing campaign to reduce the risk of dengue fever, which is caused by mosquitoes breeding in stagnant water. He said that the district administration teams also sealed two dairy farms where dengue larvae were found. These farms were reportedly not maintaining proper hygiene and had open water sources—ideal conditions for mosquito breeding. Another site sealed was a private factory located in the industrial area of Sector I-9. Health teams discovered larvae in open containers and near water collection points inside the factory premises. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, said the administration is intensifying its efforts to prevent the spread of dengue. He stated that strict monitoring would continue and those who fail to follow safety measures would face legal action. Those responsible for creating mosquito breeding grounds will not be spared. Our teams are working daily to check locations where dengue larvae are most likely to be found," he said. The deputy commissioner also made a public appeal, asking residents to support the campaign by keeping their homes and surroundings clean. He urged people to avoid storing water in open containers and to regularly check rooftops, backyards, and storage areas. He said that the dengue control teams are visiting residential areas, industrial zones, and open plots on a daily basis. Areas at high risk are being checked more frequently. In recent weeks, several warnings were issued to property owners, but a lack of cooperation led to direct action in some cases. Health experts said that dairy farms and industrial areas are especially concerning because of large water storage facilities and poor drainage systems. When owners fail to maintain cleanliness, these sites become breeding grounds for mosquitoes.—DNA

# Naqvi inspects Jinnah Square underpass project

ISLAMABAD:Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a late-night visit to the Jinnah Square Murree Road Underpass Project to review the ongoing construction work. During his visit, he expressed satisfaction with the pace of the project and directed that it be completed within the set timeline. Accompanied by senior officials, Minister Naqvi also inspected Shaheen Chowk on Margalla Road and the Faizabad Interchange – two key traffic points in the federal capital. He emphasized the need to use all available resources to ensure timely completion of the underpass, which is aimed at easing traffic congestion on Murree Road. Speaking to the media and officials on-site, Mohsin Naqvi said that the stretch from Jinnah Square to Faizabad Chowk would be developed as a model road. He instructed that this road should include beautiful lighting and proper landscaping to enhance its appearance and improve the driving experience for commuters. The minister also announced that Margalla Road will be made signal-free in phases to help reduce traffic pressure, particularly around Shaheen Chowk, which is currently one of the busiest intersections. He stressed that the construction of an underpass at this location will play a key role in managing traffic flow more efficiently. Regarding the Faizabad Interchange, which connects Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Minister Naqvi directed that remodeling work should begin soon. He said that the interchange would be widened to improve traffic movement between the twin cities. "Our goal is to make Islamabad a world-class city in terms of public facilities and infrastructure," said Mohsin Naqvi. Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, briefed the minister during the visit. He informed that work on the underpass is progressing rapidly and, God willing, it will be completed on time. He added that efforts are underway to reduce traffic congestion and provide better facilities to citizens. The visit highlighted the government's focus on improving infrastructure and ensuring better urban planning for the residents of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.—DNA

# SC summons top officials in katchi abadi case

It also directed authorities to submit the minutes of the working committee meetings on katchi abadis

ISLAMABAD:The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday summoned the Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the Member Planning CDA, and the Secretary of the Law and Justice Commission in a case concerning informal settlements (katchi abadis) in Islamabad. The hearing was conducted by five-member Constitutional Bench headed by Justice Amin ul Din Khan. During the course of proceedings, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar questioned the CDA's policy regarding katchi abadis, noting that a dedicated Katchi Abadi Act already exists in Sindh. CDA's legal counsel, Munir Paracha, argued that it is the federal government's responsibility to legislate on the matter. However, Justice Mazhar responded that it was the CDA's duty to propose relevant legislation to the federal government. Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi expressed concern, noting the presence of informal settlements even near the Diplomatic Enclave. The CDA lawyer acknowledged that some katchi abadis are recognized by the authority. Justice Aminuddin Khan questioned the legal basis for selec-

tively recognizing some settlements while ignoring others. Justice Jamal Mandokhail further asked the CDA counsel to define what qualifies as a katchi abadi. "If it means mud houses, then 90 percent of Balochistan would qualify," he said. Justice Rizvi noted that the Supreme Court had ordered legislation on the issue back in 2016. Justice Mazhar pointed out that the case has been pending since 2015, yet no significant progress has been made in the past decade. The CDA's lawyer argued that due to a court-issued stay order, both informal settlements and encroachments in Islamabad have increased. Justice Mazhar responded, "The real issue is that contempt proceedings should have been initiated against CDA." The lawyer countered that CDA has been participating in every meeting of the committee established under the Law and Justice Commission following the Supreme Court's directive. Justice Mandokhail remarked that those residing in these areas from the beginning may have a claim to ownership, while later arrivals could be considered informal settlers. Justice Mazhar criticized the

CDA's apparent "pick and choose" policy regarding settlements. Justice Rizvi also questioned the original purpose for which the land was allotted, adding that these settlements have not sprung up overnight—residents have been living there for 10 to 15 years. Justice Mazhar emphasized that despite several detailed orders issued by the court since 2016, they have not been implemented. Additional Attorney General Aamir Rehman informed the court that five to six meetings have taken place since the 2016 directive. Justice Mazhar asked why those meetings failed to yield results and demanded the official meeting minutes. Justice Mandokhail suggested that CDA must find a solution without disturbing Islamabad's master plan. The court summoned the CDA Chairman, Member Planning, and Secretary of the Law and Justice Commission for the next hearing. It also directed authorities to submit the minutes of the working committee meetings on katchi abadis. The hearing was adjourned indefinitely.—APP

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## Briefs

## SC seeks report on committee formed to restore student unions

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday sought a detailed report regarding the committee formed to devise a framework for the restoration of student unions in educational institutions. A five-member constitutional bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, heard the case challenging the long-standing ban on student unions. During the hearing, Additional Attorney General Aamir Rehman informed the court that the government had constituted a committee to formulate a mechanism for restoring student unions, and an interim report had already been submitted. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked that in the past, student wings of political parties existed across all universities. He emphasized that any new system should be designed in a way that ensures student representation remains limited to their respective universities. He further noted that the issue primarily concerns public universities, as private institutions generally do not face such problems. Justice Mazhar added that forming a student welfare association is entirely different from establishing political party wings. "If political wings are allowed, political flags will inevitably make their way onto campuses," he warned. The court directed the government to submit a comprehensive report on the progress and recommendations of the committee and adjourned the hearing indefinitely.—APP

## CCP imposes Rs 155m fine on poultry hatcheries

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has imposed a collective fine of Rs. 155 million on eight major poultry hatcheries for cartelization and pricefixing of day-old broiler chicks (DOCs). The CCP took suo motu notice of cartelization in the Day-Old Chick (DOC) market and initiated a comprehensive inquiry. The inquiry found that major hatcheries — including Sadiq Poultry, HiTech Group, Islamabad Group, Olympia Group, Jadeed Group, Supreme Farms (Seasons Group), Big Bird Group, and Sabir's Group — engaged in coordinated pricefixing, in violation of Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010, according to the data issued here on Wednesday. The Cartel Operate, hatcheries formed a cartel and discussed prices in a WhatsApp group called "Chick Rate Announcement," administered by a senior official of Big Bird Group. Dr. Shahid, Marketing Manager Big Bird Group, coordinated the daily price updates. He sent the next day's prices every day through phone texts or WhatsApp messages to the group members. Dr. Abdul Karim, Chairman Hatchery Affairs Committee of the Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA), and Major (R) Syed Javid Hussain Bukhari, Secretary General of PPA, were also part of the group. The group members actively discussed and shared next-day prices for approximately 198 times, in the years 2019 to 2021. The Price-Sensitive Information was exchanged 108 times via text messages and 87 times through WhatsApp.—APP

## Hockey legend Floris attends Dutch King's Day reception

Dutch hockey legend Floris Jan Boveland, a key figure in the Netherlands' 1990 Hockey World Cup victory in Lahore, attended the event as the guest of honor. During his week-long visit, Boveland will conduct specialized training clinics, engage with young athletes, and participate in workshops on modern coaching techniques

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Islamabad hosted King's Day celebration, commemorating the birthday of King Willem-Alexander while emphasizing sports diplomacy, bilateral collaboration, and youth empowerment. The event underscored the shared commitment of Pakistan and the Netherlands to leverage sports as a tool for social inclusion, cultural exchange, and international goodwill. The Dutch ambassador highlighted the significance of the occasion, stating, "In a world that can feel increasingly divided, sport reminds us of what we have in common. It empowers us and teaches us teamwork and respect—values we need both on the field and in our everyday lives, as we build bridges between cultures and people. I am appreciative of the Prime Minister's



Youth Program, which is doing important work to expand access to sports for young people across

Pakistan—especially for girls, who deserve equal opportunity to play, compete, and thrive. Dutch hockey

legend Floris Jan Boveland, a key figure in the Netherlands' 1990 Hockey World Cup victory

in Lahore, attended the event as the guest of honor. During his week-long visit, Boveland will conduct specialized training clinics, engage with young athletes, and participate in workshops on modern coaching techniques. Federal Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan, the Chief Guest, reaffirmed Pakistan's dedication to sports revival, stating, "The government's declaration of 2025 as the 'Year of Sports Revival' aligns perfectly with today's event. Collaborations with partners like the Netherlands are critical to nurturing talent and encouragement international camaraderie." The event's centerpiece was the "Sports Connect" exhibition, which showcased stories of Dutch and Pakistani athletes, including Olympian Arshad Nadeem, footballer Malik-e-Noor, and Dutch street football pioneer Rocky Hehakajja, through immersive displays and narratives. Attendees also explored hands-on hockey skill zone.

## PM, army chief praised for Pakistan's progress

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, the President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, the President of All Karachi Industrial Alliance, the Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board, and the President and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Wednesday that the role of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan Hafiz General Asim Munir is commendable for the stability and prosperity of Pakistan. He said that if India tries to wage war, the entire nation will give a befitting reply to India under the capable leadership of General Asim Munir. Mian Zahid Hussain said that

Pakistan was established based on the two-nation theory, which is imperative for the protection of our ideological and geographical borders. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that despite challenges, the country's economy is stabilising due to the joint efforts of the government and the armed forces, as evidenced by recent economic indicators and the business community's confidence. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the Pahalgaon attack is a lie and a conspiracy of the Modi government, which is being strongly condemned in Pakistan and around the world. He added that India is always busy with conspiracies against Pakistan and harming minorities in India; it has been instigating terrorism in

Pakistan for 70 years. In recent years, the ugly face of India has been visible behind the increasing incidents of terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. He observed that no country in the region is safe from its unholy designs. The business leader said that India had started the arms race in the region so that Pakistan's increasing defense expenditures would burden it, but Pakistan did not fall prey to this deception. He warned that India's war madness will affect billions of people around the world as Modi is violating international laws by breaking the Indus Water Treaty, which will not be allowed. Mian Zahid Hussain said that whenever Pakistan moves towards progress and prosperity, India starts to feel queasy,

and a web of conspiracies is spread. He said that the nation has forgotten its political differences, has become united, and is proud of its army's capabilities. India cannot compete with a united country or carry out its nefarious agenda. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the Pakistani armed forces and national security agencies have made eternal and unparalleled sacrifices for the country's security and peace, for which the entire nation is grateful. The Prime Minister has shocked India by hinting at an international investigation into the Pahalgaon incident. The government's decisions in the Security Committee regarding India align with the nation's aspirations, and our armed forces are fully capable of thwarting the enemy's nefarious intentions.

## Pak educator serves as community's first foreign 'river chief'

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Aiza Kashif, a Pakistani biology teacher has achieved the honour of serving as community's first foreign 'river chief' in Shanghai. Dr. Aiza has called China home for nearly 13 years has become more than a profession - it's a way of life that bridges her two homelands. Serving as her community's first foreign "river chief," she combines scientific expertise with grassroots activism to protect Shanghai's waterways, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. "When I first saw Shanghai's community spirit and environmental commitment, I knew I wanted to contribute," says Dr. Kashif, her eyes lighting up as she recalls her decision to volunteer. Every week, she walks her designated stretch of riverbank, smartphone in hand, ready to document any pollution. "On one occasion, I documented waste dumping through photographic evidence. Authorities swiftly traced the source and cleaned the waste within hours - demonstrating the responsive governance that enables meaningful environmental progress." The path hasn't been without obstacles. "Early on, language barriers sometimes hampered my reports," she admits. "And confronting the pollution - industrial runoff, floating garbage - tested my resolve." Her breakthrough came when she took part in a community cleanup initiative, working with neighbors and students to remove large amounts of trash while raising awareness about river conservation. "The area now has more proper waste receptacles and containment barriers," she noted. "Where garbage once accumulated, I now see residents fishing - that's the real measure of progress." Dr. Kashif's environmental work complements her role as an IB Environmental Systems teacher at an international school. "I bring river conservation into my classroom," she explains, showing student projects inspired by her patrols. "I often share my experiences as a river inspector to illustrate concepts such as ecosystem health, biodiversity, pollution impacts and community action. It helps students see the tangible effects of what they learn and inspires them to think about their own roles in sustainability." Dr. Kashif's civic engagement spans a wider range of social causes beyond environmental protection. In 2016, she was appointed as the "Anti-Drug Abuse Ambassador" for Shanghai's Zhangjiang Town, applying insights gained from her earlier volunteer work in U.S. hospitals. The fruits of her community service are evident in her home - Shanghai's 2019 Outstanding Volunteer Award and other recognitions sit proudly alongside the children's books used in her volunteer reading sessions.—DNA

## Pak, Kazakhstan varsity heads vow to strengthen collaboration

Kazakh universities displayed their academic strengths at the educational forum set up as 'Study in Kazakhstan', offering academic prospects for international students

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has organised a forum for Vice Chancellors from Pakistani and Kazakh universities at National University of Technology (NUTECH), Islamabad to enhance academic cooperation and institutional linkages between the two countries. According to official details, a delegation of 12 leading Kazakh universities is on a visit to Pakistan. Chairman HEC Dr Mukhtar Ahmed chaired the forum attended by heads of different universities from the two sides. He welcomed the dignitaries to Pakistan and reaffirmed HEC's commitment to facilitating partnerships in the higher education sector. The Chairman

emphasized the importance of collaboration and urged participating universities to explore opportunities for academic and research partnerships. He underlined the need for establishing a consortium of Pakistan-Kazakhstan universities to formalize the efforts being made to strengthen bilateral academic relations. Mr. Tlekali Erkegali, an expert from International Cooperation Department at Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Kazakhstan, expressed Kazakhstan's strong interest in forging partnerships with Pakistani institutions. He highlighted the reforms and initiatives undertaken by the Ministry to raise educational standards to international levels and promote internationalization of the country's higher education sector. The

participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from both countries, referred to as founding members of the consortium, agreed that the platform would serve to pave the way for future collaborative initiatives. Each member institution would nominate a focal person for future coordination, while HEC would provide secretariat support. HEC Global Engagement (GE) Division led by Advisor Mr. Awais Ahmad played a key role in organizing the forum and paving the way for strengthening relations among Pakistani and Kazakh universities. Kazakh universities displayed their academic strengths at the educational forum set up as 'Study in Kazakhstan', offering academic prospects for international students.

## Tea imports decreased 5.45% in 09 months

ISLAMABAD: Tea imports into the country during the first nine months of the current financial year decreased by 5.45 per cent compared to the imports of the corresponding period last year. During the period from July to March 2024-25, over 184,663 metric tons of tea valued at \$468.248 million were imported, as compared to the imports of 199,512 metric tons worth \$495.217 million during the same period last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. During the period from July to March 2024-25, imports of food commodities went down from \$6.290 billion to \$6.118 billion as compared to the imports of the same period of the last year, it added. Meanwhile, the imports of sugar into the country also decreased by 1.75 per cent as 2,673 metric tons of sugar valued at \$2,627 million were imported as compared to the imports of 2,794 metric tons worth of \$2,674 million.—APP

## Al-Shifa Trust launches mobile eye surgery unit for remote communities

## DNA

RAWALPINDI: In a decisive step towards reducing avoidable blindness in underserved regions of the country, the Al-Shifa Trust (AST) has launched a fully equipped mobile operation theatre (OT) donated by the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL). The high-tech unit comprising three fully trucks will bring life-changing eye surgeries to the doorsteps of those who cannot afford travel or access to hospitals located in major cities, significantly improving their quality of life. At the handover ceremony held at THQ Hospital Fateh Jang, Major General (Retd.)

Rehmat Khan, President of Al-Shifa Trust, called the mobile OT "a beacon of hope" for rural communities. He said that through our Al-Shifa Centre for Community Ophthalmology (ACCO), we are committed to reaching people where help is needed most. The AST operates one of the country's most extensive outreach

programs for preventing blindness. During the 2024-25 financial year, nearly 360,000 schoolchildren were screened for vision problems, he informed. Maj. Gen. Rehmat Khan added that 700 eye camps have already been held this year, a 30% increase over last year, and we are determined to go further in our mission to prevent

avoidable blindness. He informed that the mobile unit, built to international standards, can perform up to 100 eye surgeries daily in areas lacking surgical facilities. Dr. Muhammad Najam Ul Hasnat, the outreach program's general manager, said this mobile OT is sterile, self-contained, and ready to serve communities in even the

most remote locations. OGDCL Managing Director Mr. Ahmed Hayat Lak, who was chief guest at the occasion, highlighted the organization's longstanding support of Al-Shifa Trust. He said that since 2017, we've sponsored 160 surgical camps, enabled 28,000 surgeries, treated over 260,000 patients, and screened 75,000 schoolchildren. Mr. Ahmed Hayat Lak added that the mobile unit will enhance time management and bring new dimensions to the cause. He expressed pride in working with Al-Shifa Trust and affirmed a commitment to strengthening cooperation with the trust. Doctors, paramedics, and local officials attended the event, which concluded with an on-site eye camp.



## 99 Gwadar students awarded Chinese Consular Scholarship Program

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Amid blossoming Pak-China educational cooperation, 99 Gwadar students have been awarded "Chinese Consular Scholarship Program" in a ceremony held at the Gwadar Business Center. The scholarship was conferred to 30 females and 39 male students in the fields of Pharm D, BBA, Sociology, Fine Arts, MBBS, Mphil, B.ED, LLB, Public Administration, Civil Engineering, Radiology, Fisheries, Political Science, Botany, Bio Chemistry and Management Science. These students belong to the University of Gwadar, Pak-China Technical & Vocational Institute and other universities. Speaking online on this occasion, Chinese Consul General Karachi Yang Yundong termed the event a significant milestone in facilitating deserving students for quality education in various fields. The Consul General highlighted the initiatives Chinese government has taken in Gwadar in the form of solar panel distribution, food programs, livelihood initiatives and educational and health development programs. He assured more such projects will be launched in the coming months, according to a published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday.—APP

## IRSA releases 133,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 133,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 155,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1431.27 feet which was 29.27 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 55,600 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1131.75 feet, which was 81.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 43,500 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 77,200, 47,900, 38,700 and 9,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 29,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 17,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

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## Time to rein in telecom providers’ fleecing practices

THE telecom industry in Pakistan, once considered a shining example of digital transformation and connectivity, is now facing a growing credibility crisis. A surge in customer complaints, especially regarding hidden charges, poor service, and lack of redressal mechanisms, has led to widespread dissatisfaction and a gradual erosion of public trust in major telecom companies. One of the most pressing concerns revolves around the excessive and often unexplained deductions in mobile balance—particularly for post-paid customers. Many users report being billed for services they never subscribed to, or encountering recurring charges for vague “value-added services” they neither need nor use. These hidden fees are not only unethical but border on fraudulent behavior, especially when no prior consent has been obtained from the customer. When frustrated users attempt to resolve these issues by visiting telecom service centers, they are often met with vague explanations or are asked to “wait for system updates.” In most cases, their billing anomalies are not rectified, leaving them helpless and unheard. The situation is even worse for those living in smaller cities or remote areas, where access to support centers is limited and digital grievance platforms rarely deliver satisfactory outcomes. Post-paid subscribers—often the most loyal and high-paying customers—seem to be among the most aggrieved. Despite regularly clearing their bills, many find their credit limits arbitrarily reduced or their numbers inexplicably blocked. Such issues not only disrupt communication but also impact professional commitments and business dealings, leading to a significant decline in customer satisfaction. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), the industry regulator, must take swift and decisive action to address this growing concern. While the PTA has been responsive in the past on certain issues, it now needs to establish more stringent oversight of billing practices and ensure transparency in customer charges. An independent audit mechanism must be instituted to review telecom billing systems, with penalties for discrepancies and compensation for affected users. If immediate regulatory measures are not taken, the telecom industry risks losing its customer base altogether. Already, many users are switching networks in search of better service and transparency. However, if all providers continue to engage in similar exploitative practices, customers will be left with no viable options. The telecom sector is too vital to Pakistan’s economy and digital future to be allowed to operate without accountability. The time has come for the PTA to restore public trust, protect consumer rights, and ensure that telecom companies are held to the highest standards of integrity and service. The people of Pakistan deserve nothing less.

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# Pakistan’s enduring unity against indian aggression

**Qamar Bashir**



This unity is not blind nationalism. It does not mean Pakistanis agree on everything—or anything—outside of national security. But it is a conscious prioritization of state survival over sectional interests when the threat is real. It is an understanding that no matter how bitter the internal disputes may be, they cannot be allowed to embolden or invite external aggression. Minister Tarar’s statement gains its real strength from this collective instinct

PAKISTAN, a country often portrayed through the lens of political instability, economic turbulence, and internal strife, reveals a strikingly different character when confronted by threats from abroad. While its streets may echo with the voices of dissent and disagreement, and while provinces, ethnic groups, and political factions may spar over resources, representation, or ideology, all these differences melt away in the face of foreign aggression. It is in moments of external crisis that the true resilience and unity of Pakistan assert themselves—unmistakable, immovable, and unmatched. The tragic incident in Pahalgam and the subsequent Indian accusations directed at Pakistan have triggered such a moment. Without credible evidence or the completion of a thorough investigation, India has mobilized aggressive rhetoric, raising the specter of a military response. Pakistan, however, is not merely responding with diplomacy and warnings; it is revealing something more formidable—national cohesion that transcends its internal contradictions. The warning issued by Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, citing credible intelligence of an impending Indian strike within 24 to 36 hours, underscores the gravity of the moment. But more telling than the content of the minister’s statement is the spirit in which it has been received across Pakistan. It has not deepened divisions. Instead, it has catalyzed a familiar, almost reflexive instinct: unity in defense of sovereignty. Pakistan’s political culture is as vibrant as it is contentious. From federal-provincial tensions to ethnic grievances, religious sectarianism, and competing party ideologies, the country is no stranger to discord. The last decade alone has witnessed mass protests, changes in government through both electoral and judicial processes, economic disruptions, and serious insurgent challenges—particularly in Balochistan and along the western borders. Yet, when the Indian threat looms, there is a visible recalibration across society. Political leaders who cannot agree on tax reform or electoral procedures suddenly speak in unison about defending the motherland. Ethnic communities with longstanding grievances rally behind the national flag. Media, often bitterly divided along partisan lines, align their coverage in defense of national integrity. Even insurgent narratives fade into the background when national survival is perceived to be at stake. This phenomenon is neither manufactured nor

symbolic—it is deeply historical and psychological. It was evident during the 1965 and 1971 wars with India, resurfaced during the Kargil conflict, and once again during the Balakot episode in 2019. In each instance, internal conflicts paused, if not dissolved entirely, in service of a greater cause: the defense of Pakistan. It is easy to dismiss this unity as temporary or reactionary, but that would be to miss its structural significance. The Pakistani nation, despite all its fractures, retains a foundational identity built around its creation as a homeland for Muslims in South Asia. That identity is most activated when external forces threaten its existence, dignity, or sovereignty. In many ways, this national instinct is rooted in survival. Pakistan was born in the crucible of Partition, with immediate hostility from its neighbor and multiple wars within its first few decades. It developed not only a physical defense apparatus in response, but also a social one—a deeply embedded consensus that territorial integrity and sovereignty are non-negotiable, regardless of who is in power or how deep domestic problems run. This unity is not blind nationalism. It does not mean Pakistanis agree on everything—or anything—outside of national security. But it is a conscious prioritization of state survival over sectional interests when the threat is real. It is an understanding that no matter how bitter the internal disputes may be, they cannot be allowed to embolden or invite external aggression. Minister Tarar’s statement gains its real strength from this collective instinct. His declaration that “the nation reiterates its resolve to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan at all cost” is not mere political posturing. It reflects a lived reality. Across provinces, languages, and party lines, there is little debate on this issue. That cohesion is Pakistan’s greatest strength—and its ultimate deterrent. Consider recent history. Pakistan’s response to Indian aggression in 2019 was calibrated and effective. Despite economic strain and political tension, the country’s military response, diplomatic mobilization, and public unity forced a strategic re-evaluation in India. The downing of an Indian fighter jet and the return of the captured pilot was not only a military maneuver but also a message of strategic discipline and national solidarity. This unity also explains Pakistan’s credible deterrence posture. While India’s defense spending is significantly higher, and its military size and technology more expansive,

it is Pakistan’s cohesive will and unshakeable defense doctrine that maintain regional balance. The resolve of its population—to support its military, absorb pressure, and respond as one—compensates for many quantitative disadvantages. India, on the other hand, appears to be ignoring this pattern. By attempting to isolate an incident like Pahalgam and use it to manufacture a pretext for aggression, it risks underestimating both Pakistan’s resolve and its history of united resistance. That miscalculation could be catastrophic—not just for bilateral relations but for the entire South Asian region. Another aspect often overlooked in such scenarios is the message it sends to Pakistan’s younger generation. While internal politics may erode faith in governance, these moments of national defense re-establish the idea of collective identity. It is in these crucibles that patriotism is not taught but experienced. When political workers, religious leaders, and critics alike rally behind the national interest, it creates a template of civic maturity and democratic responsibility. This is not to glorify conflict, nor to deny Pakistan’s internal challenges. But it is to affirm a truth that foreign analysts often miss: that Pakistan’s internal instability does not equate to national fragility. On the contrary, its ability to self-correct, mobilize, and unify in response to external aggression is proof of a deeply resilient nation-state. In conclusion, if India is considering a military move based on unverified claims, it should consider not only Pakistan’s defensive capabilities but also its internal cohesion. What appears to be a divided nation is, in moments like these, a wall of steel. Any adventurism will not face a fragmented state but a consolidated will. Pakistanis may argue over policy, governance, or ideology—but when the land is threatened, they speak with one voice. The Pahalgam incident, tragic as it is, should have been a cause for collective mourning and sober investigation. Instead, it is being transformed into a catalyst for conflict. If India proceeds, it must be prepared to face not just the Pakistani military, but a united Pakistani nation—one that has stood this test many times before, and will again.

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

# Pahalgam attack and the imperative of dialogue

**Mian Zunair Ishaq**



In addition to nuclear deterrence, longstanding agreements like the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) of 1960 have contributed to relative restraint between India and Pakistan. Brokered with the assistance of the World Bank, the IWT governs the sharing of the Indus river system’s waters, allocating control of the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej rivers to India and the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab rivers to Pakistan. Despite numerous conflicts, the treaty has endured for over six decades, symbolizing...

THE recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, has once again heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, drawing attention to the fragile stability of South Asia. Following the attack, India swiftly attributed responsibility to Pakistan-based militant groups, following a pattern seen in previous incidents of cross-border terrorism. This episode particularly evokes memories of the 2019 Pulwama attack, in which a suicide bombing claimed the lives of 40 Indian soldiers and brought the two nuclear-armed neighbors to the brink of war. In response to Pulwama, India launched airstrikes within Pakistan’s territory, specifically targeting what it claimed to be terrorist infrastructure in Balakot. Pakistan, in turn, retaliated by shooting down an Indian MiG-21 fighter jet and capturing pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman. However, Pakistan’s subsequent decision to return the captured pilot to India as a goodwill gesture was widely interpreted as a move to de-escalate the crisis and project an image of responsible behavior before the international community. At that time, numerous analysts criticized India for allegedly exploiting the situation for domestic political gains, thereby exposing its aggressive posture on the international stage. The current situation surrounding the Pahalgam attack bears notable similarities to the Pulwama crisis, yet historical precedents suggest that a full-scale war remains unlikely between the two states. The international response to the Pahalgam attack has largely mirrored previous reactions to India-Pakistan crises. Major global powers such as the United States, China, the United Kingdom and the European Union have urged both nations to exercise maximum restraint. The United States, emphasizing the importance of regional stability, has called for peaceful dialogue and greater cooperation against terrorism, while explicitly discouraging any military escalations. China, maintaining its traditionally close ties with Pakistan, has advocated for bilateral dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad, reiterating its support for Pakistan’s stance on regional security. The United Kingdom and European Union have similarly expressed grave concerns about the potential for escalation and have recommended diplomatic solutions over military responses. International media outlets have extensively highlighted the risks posed by any renewed conflict between India and Pakistan, particularly given the nuclear capabilities of both nations. Analysts agree that the severe consequences of nuclear escalation act as a significant deterrent, rendering a full-scale war economically, politically and morally untenable for both countries. One of the primary reasons a full-scale war remains improbable is the doctrine of Mutual

Assured Destruction (MAD), a strategic reality that has defined India-Pakistan relations since both nations became nuclear powers. The concept of MAD asserts that any nuclear exchange would ensure the total destruction of both the attacker and defender, thereby serving as a powerful deterrent against the initiation of large-scale hostilities. This deterrence has historically restrained both India and Pakistan during critical confrontations, including the Kargil War of 1999, the 2001–2002 military standoff following the Indian Parliament attack and the Balakot airstrikes of 2019. In each instance, despite the intensity of the crises, neither state escalated to the point of full-scale conventional war, demonstrating a shared understanding that the survival of their populations and nations must take precedence over nationalist fervor or military ambition. In addition to nuclear deterrence, longstanding agreements like the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) of 1960 have contributed to relative restraint between India and Pakistan. Brokered with the assistance of the World Bank, the IWT governs the sharing of the Indus river system’s waters, allocating control of the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej rivers to India and the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab rivers to Pakistan. Despite numerous conflicts, the treaty has endured for over six decades, symbolizing a rare and crucial avenue of cooperation between the two adversaries. Any attempt by India to violate or abandon the treaty could provoke severe international backlash and potentially destabilize the region further. In such a scenario, Pakistan would likely resort to legal recourse through international forums, leverage its diplomatic ties with key allies such as China and, in an extreme case, consider military options if its water security were critically endangered. Thus, the enduring relevance of the Indus Waters Treaty serves as another safeguard against the outbreak of large-scale hostilities. While the potential for limited, localized conflict remains, particularly along the volatile Line of Control (LoC), the likelihood of a full-fledged conventional war is minimal. Tactical operations, cross-border skirmishes and even limited aerial strikes such as the 2019 Balakot action may occur without escalating into broader warfare. This restraint is driven by several factors: the devastating economic consequences of war, the immediate diplomatic intervention expected from influential actors like the United States, China and the European Union and the omnipresent risk of nuclear escalation. In an era where economic interdependence and global connectivity shape national interests, neither India nor Pakistan can afford the political isolation and financial ruin that a major war would precipitate.

Given this context, the future path for India and Pakistan should be firmly rooted in diplomacy and peaceful coexistence. Historical experience demonstrates that wars, rather than resolving disputes, exacerbate suffering, weaken economies and set back national development by generations. The devastation wrought by major 20th-century conflicts such as the First and Second World Wars, as well as the Cold War’s persistent state of militarized tension, underscores the imperative of avoiding armed confrontation. Instead, both nations should invest in diplomatic engagement, working sincerely toward resolving longstanding disputes like Kashmir through negotiation and conflict-resolution mechanisms. Confidence-building measures (CBMs) that promote transparency, reduce mistrust and foster mutual understanding are essential steps toward lasting peace. Moreover, economic cooperation holds immense potential as a stabilizing force between India and Pakistan. Increasing bilateral trade, joint investment initiatives and regional infrastructure projects could significantly enhance prosperity for both nations, thereby creating mutual stakes in each other’s stability. The dividends of economic growth are far greater than the fleeting gains of military victories and both nations must recognize this reality. Human development must also be prioritized over military expenditures. Investments in education, healthcare and poverty alleviation would not only enhance domestic welfare but also reduce the socio-political conditions that breed extremism and conflict. Encouraging cultural exchanges, academic partnerships and grassroots initiatives for people-to-people contact can further break down stereotypes and promote a narrative of shared humanity. India and Pakistan must internalize the lessons of history. The notion that wars strengthen national pride is a dangerous fallacy; history repeatedly shows that conflict weakens nations while peace fosters strength, resilience and prosperity. The future of South Asia hinges on cooperation, not confrontation. The Pahalgam attack, tragic as it is, must not be allowed to derail efforts at peacebuilding. Both governments must exercise prudent, visionary leadership to navigate this crisis and avoid plunging the region into another cycle of violence. Given the nuclear overhang, the immense economic stakes and the unequivocal disapproval of the international community toward military escalation, war is not a viable option. Diplomacy, dialogue and a commitment to regional cooperation represent the only realistic and responsible path forward for India and Pakistan.

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## Briefs

## 'We will respond very strongly'...

FROM PAGE 01  
Reiterating Pakistan's position, Dar clarified that while Pakistan will not escalate the situation, any aggressive move by India will be met with a "befitting and decisive response" from Pakistan. "The international community must consider the broader implications of India's actions on regional stability," he added. The foreign minister also questioned India's timing, suggesting that the country deliberately raises tensions to deflect attention from its internal issues, particularly the unresolved Kashmir dispute, which remains the root cause of instability in South Asia. Dar stressed that India's allegations against Pakistan regarding the Pahalgalam attack were part of a long-standing pattern of fabricating terrorism accusations for political gain, aimed at suppressing Kashmiris' right to self-determination and justifying draconian laws.

## Shehbaz briefs Rubio about...

FROM PAGE 01  
He urged the US to impress upon India to dial down the rhetoric and act responsibly. He said it was most regrettable that India had chosen to weaponise water, which was a lifeline for 240 million people of Pakistan, while also stressing that the Indus Waters Treaty had no provision for either side to unilaterally renege from its commitments. The Prime Minister emphasized that peaceful resolution of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute was the only way to ensure lasting peace in South Asia. On bilateral cooperation, the Prime Minister highlighted that Pakistan and the U.S. had worked together closely over the past seventy years and there was a lot that both sides could cooperate on, including counter-terrorism and enhanced economic cooperation, particularly the minerals sector.

## NAB unearths Rs 40 bln...

FROM PAGE 01  
information about massive financial irregularities in Upper Kohistan. Despite an annual developmental budget of only Rs500 million to Rs1.5 billion, nearly Rs40 billion were misappropriated from government accounts over five years (2020 to 2024) — a figure far exceeding decades of the district's developmental grants. The sophisticated fraud has astonished even seasoned NAB investigators. As per details Rs40 billion were embezzled from the provincial government bank account titled Security and Deposit Works KP 10113 under the pretence of contractor securities.

## Power tariff likely to rise in summer...

FROM PAGE 01  
The Central Power Purchasing Agency Guarantee Limited (CPPA-G) requested a negative adjustment of 3 paisa per unit in FCA. When combined with the previously approved 90 paisa per unit for April, May and June 2025, the net negative impact will be 50 paisa per unit. The NPCC General Manager clarified while there will be no shortage in power generation, FCA will increase due to use of costlier fuels. The CPPA-G Chief Executive Officer, Rihan Akhtar, supported NPCC's assessment regarding expected rise in FCA.

## Pakistan Army war exercises continue

FROM PAGE 01  
against any aggression, they said. Officers and Jawans of the Pakistan Armed Forces are prepared to render sacrifices for the security and defense of the country, the sources said. The Pakistan Army remains vigilant and fully committed to its national duty.

## Govt takes notice of athletics team's no-show at Iran event

In a formal communication, the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has demanded a detailed explanation from the Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP), calling into question the federation's administrative conduct and decision-making. The PSB's letter noted that the Iranian organisers had already made extensive non-refundable logistical arrangements—such as visa processing, hotel bookings, and local transportation—for seven top-tier Pakistani athletes and an accompanying team manager

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has taken serious notice of the national athletics team's abrupt withdrawal from the prestigious Imam Ali Reza Athletics Championship in Mashhad, Iran. Despite having been granted the necessary training facilities and a no-objection certificate (NOC), the team failed to travel at the last minute, prompting official scrutiny and backlash. In a formal communication, the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has demanded a detailed explanation from the Athletics Fed-

eration of Pakistan (AFP), calling into question the federation's administrative conduct and decision-making. The PSB's letter noted that the Iranian organisers had already made extensive non-refundable logistical arrangements—such as visa processing, hotel bookings, and local transportation—for seven top-tier Pakistani athletes and an accompanying team manager. The no-show has not only caused financial losses to the hosts but also significantly damaged Pakistan's international sporting reputation. Moreover, it deprived Pakistan's athletes of a critical opportunity to gain international exposure and test their

preparedness against global competitors. The PSB has directed the AFP to submit a comprehensive written response within three days, clarifying the reasons behind the withdrawal. The letter warned that such lapses would not be tolerated in the future and highlighted the urgent need for transparency, accountability, and professionalism within national sports federations. Criticism is also mounting from within the sports community. Several observers and former athletes have labelled the move as evidence of poor governance and mismanagement within the AFP. Many believe

the decision reflects a broader pattern of inefficiency and lack of strategic planning in Pakistan's athletics administration. The incident has sparked concern that if such issues persist, Pakistan's standing in international athletics could further deteriorate. Athletes, who dedicate months of hard work and training for these opportunities, are increasingly demoralized by such administrative failures. As the government looks to revamp the national sports structure, the Athletics Federation of Pakistan may now come under tighter scrutiny, with calls for reform growing louder from both athletes and stakeholders alike.

## Babar Azam prioritizes performance over chatter

*Peshawar Zalmi captain says fans' support brings pressure, but he strives never to disappoint them*

WEB DESK

LAHORE: Peshawar Zalmi captain Babar Azam has said that the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 10 has been a mixed experience — both in terms of team and personal performance. According to Babar Azam the Pakistan cricket team's former skipper noted that the Zalmi tried to build a winning combination at the start, securing two victories, but now need to find consistency. "Half of the tournament has passed, and we've lost matches in phases — sometimes in batting, sometimes in bowling," said Babar. "Our fielding, in particular, hasn't been good. Regardless of conditions, we must stick to the plan and make sure we don't drop catches or lose wickets at crucial moments," he added. Babar also said that people expect him to stay longer at the crease. "I enjoy even short innings, but I've not been able to play long ones as expected. I make mistakes and try to correct them next time, though new mistakes happen — that's cricket. The key is how focused you remain. I am still very focused," he said. "I play according to my game and understand where cricket is headed. I know people talk about strike rates and aggressive play. I don't need to prove to anyone what kind of player



I am — everyone already knows. I always play according to the situation and team needs," he added. Babar clarified that he has never insisted on playing at a specific batting position. "No one has changed positions as much as I have. I've batted at number six and even opened. Whether it's for the franchise or the national team, I always play where I'm needed. I've never said I won't bat at a certain number for fear of poor performance," he said. Babar said that he believes in showing performance rather than making

statements. "I know how to speak, but my elders taught me to respect others. My job is to perform on the field. I work hard and am never satisfied with my performance. Even when I've been ranked number one, I always look ahead and think of my country." Additionally, Babar revealed that decisions about his T20 career rest with the selectors and coaches. "It's not up to me whether I'm played or rested. My job is to perform — be it T20, ODI or Test cricket. I was told I'm being rested from T20s; let's see what they decide next." Moreover, he stressed that ODIs becoming irrelevant due to T20s is "not true". "The 50-over format tests your patience, and we now see scores over 350. ODIs have always been special for me, filled with good memories and performances," said Babar. Furthermore, the 30-year-old batter emphasised that the PSL is a world-class league and he felt that its graph has not declined. "Interest may vary from match to match, but overall the quality remains. Foreign players want to participate. The bowling quality here is excellent — each team has bowlers who clock over 145 kph," he said. While Babar acknowledged his fans' love and support, he admitted that fan expectations do create pressure. He said: "Their love and support mean I must perform in front of them. It gives me confidence when fans appreciate me wherever I go.

## PCB announces schedule of Pak-Bangladesh T20I series

IKRAM ULLAH JOYIA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board has confirmed that Bangladesh will tour Pakistan in May for a five-match T20I series. The series, which is part of the Future Tour Programme (FTP) originally consisted of three ODIs and three T20Is. However, with the ICC Men's T20 World Cup scheduled for next year, both the boards have mutually agreed to replace the ODIs with two additional T20Is. The five-match T20I series will be played in Faisalabad and Lahore from 25 May to 3 June. Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad, which successfully hosted the inaugural Champions One-Day Cup in September last year and National T20 Cup last month, will stage the first and second T20Is of the series, scheduled on 25 and 27 May, respectively. Iqbal Stadium, which has previously hosted 24 Tests and 16 ODIs between 1978 and 2008, will welcome back international cricket after a 17-year hiatus. The historic venue's last international fixture was an ODI between Bangladesh and Pakistan in April 2008. Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium will host the remaining three T20Is, scheduled on 30 May, 1 and 3 June. All five matches will begin at 8pm. Bangladesh team will arrive on 21 May and will undergo training sessions at the Iqbal Stadium from 22 to 24 May. **Series schedule in Pakistan**  
**21 May – Bangladesh men's team arrival**  
**25 May – First T20I at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad (8pm local time)**  
**27 May – Second T20I at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad (8pm local time)**  
**30 May – Third T20I at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore (8pm local time)**  
**1 June – Fourth T20I at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore (8pm local time)**  
**3 June – Fifth T20I at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore (8pm local time)**

## Stand firmly as one nation against Modi's...

FROM PAGE 01  
PM Modi vowing to punish those responsible. India blames Pakistan for the attack, a claim that Islamabad vehemently denied and also termed as a "false flag operation" and has further offered a credible, transparent, and independent investigation by a neutral commission of experts to ascertain the truth. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has warned that there's credible intelligence that India intends to carry out military action against Pakistan in the next 24 to 36 hours on the pretext of baseless and concocted allegations of involvement in the Pahalgalam incident. However, Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar Pakistan would not make first strike but it would respond forcefully to any aggression by India.

## Pakistan peaceful but ready...

FROM PAGE 01  
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving the military a free hand, whereas Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has yet to extend the same to the Pakistani military. He emphasised that Pakistan faced a threat from Modi's extremist government, not the Indian people, adding that Pakistan believed in peaceful neighborly relations. Ali Zafar also pointed out that India's opposition party Congress called for a joint parliamentary session to show national unity, while in Pakistan, the government continues to play politics and excluded Imran Khan from the All Parties Conference (APC).

## Govt taking steps to align with...

FROM PAGE 01  
foreign investment. He said the government's business-friendly policies and provision of investor-friendly facilities are aimed at attracting capital as well as the transfer of modern technology to the country. The Prime Minister said the government is introducing such digital technology and investment projects for youth that will help the young workforce utilize their energies in the right direction and play a key role in the economy by providing them with dignified employment opportunities. He said digital transformation is no longer mere a tendency, but a revolution that is reshaping the economies.

## Pakistan capable of driving...

FROM PAGE 01  
investors' participation and opportunities in the process of digital and other reforms in Federal Board of Revenue, said that the Pakistani business community was proving its worth and IT entrepreneurs offering valuable services in the global market. Appreciating the investment pledges of \$700 million in Pakistan's IT sector during the Digital Investment Forum held under the Digital Cooperation Conference, he said that Pakistan was home to some of the world's best experts in IT and other fields who could deliver excellent results if given opportunities in line with their capabilities and potential.

## LoC: Army destroys Indian...

FROM PAGE 01  
The Pakistan Army retaliated with precision, neutralising the threat and silencing Indian forces. Security sources reported that Pakistan's retaliatory strikes effectively destroyed several enemy bunkers, including the Chakputra post in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The swift and measured action demonstrated Pakistan's operational readiness in the face of aggression.

## McIlroy to play Scottish Open before Portrush bid

DUBLIN: The Masters champion will aim to win a second Open title at Royal Portrush from 17-20 July. The Scottish Open is the final event before golf's fourth and final major of the year and McIlroy will return to the Renaissance Club in North Berwick, where he won the title in 2023 by beating Scotland's Bob MacIntyre by one shot. "Winning a national open is always special, and I'm pleased to have the chance to compete for another Genesis Scottish Open title," McIlroy, 35, said. "It has certainly been a memorable year so far, and I'm looking forward to carrying on the momentum to the home of golf this summer." McIlroy became only the sixth man to complete the career Grand Slam of major wins when he beat Justin Rose in a play-off at Augusta earlier this month. The next big target for the world number two is the US PGA Championship at Quail Hollow — a course he has won at four times — from 15-18 May. Rose, MacIntyre, Matt Fitzpatrick, Collin Morikawa and Justin Thomas are some of the other names who have already committed to playing the Scottish Open. — Agencies



## Islamabad United add Mohammad Faig to squad amid PSL 10

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad United have added batter Mohammad Faig to their squad amid their PSL 10 campaign. The defending champions announced the inclusion of the domestic talent in a post on Instagram days after their two overseas batters Matt Short and Rassie van der Dussen were ruled out of the ongoing edition of the tournament. Mohammad Faig represented Lahore Whites in the National T20 tournament and scored an unbeaten 116 off 56 balls for the side in one of the games. Mohammad Faig becomes the second batter after Sahibzada Farhan to have caught the attention of Islamabad United management for his batting exploits in the domestic tournament. Farhan was called up to the Islamabad United squad for the PSL 10 after he smashed multiple records during his outing for the Peshawar Region in the National T20 Cup.

## Boxer Muhammad Waseem gets sponsorship for eight fights



LONDON: British-Pakistani businessman Aqib Hasaan has sponsored boxer Muhammad Waseem for the next eight fights. Boxer Muhammad Waseem met Aqib Hasaan in London where the partnership was announced. Hasaan said the partnership represents more than sponsorship as "it reflects shared values of resilience, ambition, and belief in building a stronger future for Pakistanis at home and abroad". Hasaan said: "Waseem's journey, spanning 26 years and over 300 fights, showcases the dedication and perseverance that Dream Beyond is designed to spotlight and support. The Dream Beyond platform first launched with Enaam Ahmed, British-Pakistani motorsport sensation, and now extends its support to Muhammad Waseem — strengthening our commitment to cele-

brating Pakistani excellence on the world stage." He added: "The Quetta fight has attracted major international interest, with fighters flying in from the UK and USA, as well as support from boxing legends like Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather. The collaboration between Muhammad Waseem and us was born from a longstanding personal connection, underscoring our authentic ties to community support. Waseem deserves our full support. I call on other businesses to come forward and support talents like Muhammad Waseem." The boxer from Quetta said he was thankful for the support. He said: "This is much needed support for me at this critical stage of my professional life. I have fought over 300 fights, over 15 world level professional fights. This support means a lot to me." — DNA

## Barcelona and Inter set for champions league battle

*Barcelona hosts Italian giants Inter Milan in the opening leg of their UEFA Champions League semifinal*

BARCELONA : With eight UEFA Champions League titles between them, Barcelona and Inter Milan begin their battle for the right to enter another final when they square off in the opening leg of their semifinal showdown on Wednesday night. Barcelona, who have only lost a single match in 2025, will host Inter at the Olympic Stadium, with the two-leg series then moving to Northern Italy next Tuesday, May 6 for the return fixture at the famous San Siro venue. The teams last played on October 12, 2022, in a Group C fixture at the Nou Camp in Barcelona. The teams drew 3-3 with Barcelona's Ousmane Dembele — who, incidentally, scored the game-winning goal for PSG against Arsenal in the other Champions League semifinal on Tuesday — putting the Catalans ahead in the first half, before a frantic five-goal second stanza ensued, culminating with Robert Lewandowski scoring the equaliser in stoppage time to split the points. Barcelona defeated last year's UEFA Champions League runner-up Borussia

Dortmund 5-3 on aggregate in their two-leg quarterfinal. Inter Milan booked their place in the last four of the tournament with a thrilling 2-2 draw against Bayern Munich at the San Siro on April 16, the



Nerazzurri winning the closely fought series 4-3 on aggregate. Manager Hans Flick will be without star striker Lewandowski, who is still recovering from a leg injury. In his absence, Ferran Torres is expected

to lead the line again for Barca, just as he did in the Copa del Rey final win over Real Madrid last Saturday. Goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny will hold his place in the starting XI, despite the availability of first-choice keeper Mar-Andre ter Steg, who is still working his way back to peak fitness after a long recovery from knee surgery. Inter will be without key defender Benjamin Pavard, who was injured in their 1-0 loss to Roma on Sunday. Pavard was instrumental to Inter's success against Bayern Munich in the quarterfinals, scoring what ultimately turned out to be the game-winner for the Nerazzurri in the second leg at San Siro. Offsetting the huge loss of Pavard is the return of striker Marcus Thuram, who had missed the last three games with injury. The French international is strongly tipped to start against Barcelona. The winner of this semifinal heads to Germany on May 31 for the Champions League final. European football's largest annual showpiece will be played at the 75,000-capacity Allianz Arena in Munich.

## Briefs

Rupee gains  
05 paise  
against US  
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 05 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.97 against the previous day's closing of Rs 281.02. 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.—APP

Gold price  
dips by Rs  
3,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.3,400 and was sold at Rs.345,800 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs.349,200 on the last trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs.2,915 to Rs.296,467 from Rs.299,382 whereas that of 10 gram 22 Karat went down to Rs.271,771 from Rs.274,443. The rates of per tola and ten gram silver went down by Rs.70 and Rs.60 to Rs.3,427 and Rs.2,938 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$34 to \$3,276 from \$3,310 whereas silver rates went down by \$0.70 to \$32.27, the Association reported.—APP

PSX turns  
bearish, loses  
3,545 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 3,545.60 points, a negative change of 3.09 percent, closing at 111,326.58 points as compared to 114,972.18 points on last trading day. A total of 490,948,134 shares were traded during the day as compared to 409,933,985 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 31.124 billion against Rs 29.067 billion on the last trading day. As many as 457 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 60 of them recorded gains and 352 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 45 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Cheryco PK with 46,167,601 shares at Rs 7.09 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 40,695,095 shares at Rs 1.25 per share and Bank of Punjab with 20,001,384 shares at Rs 9.12 per share. PIA Holding Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 396.94 per share closing at Rs 4,366.33 whereas runner-up was Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs 369.75 rise in its share price to close at Rs 23,469.75. Ismail Industries Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 105.68 per share price, closing at Rs 1,628.83, whereas the runner-up Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs 84.90 decline in its per share price to Rs 8,950.33.—APP

Pak-Canada  
for strengthening  
trade, investment

ISLAMABAD: Rana Ishaan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce, met Daniel Arsenaault, Counsellor at Canada's High Commission, at the Prime Minister's Office to advance bilateral trade, enhance General Preferential Tariff Plus (GPT+), progress a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), and address key issues.

The meeting focused on boosting trade, with Pakistan's textile exports and Canada's canola imports as key drivers, said a release issued here on Wednesday. Rana Ishaan highlighted the "Uraan Pakistan" vision to expand exports via Canada's GPT+, updated in January 2025 to cover 80% of tariff lines. A BIT was discussed to protect investments, supporting Canadian ventures like Scotiabank and Magna International, which create jobs in Pakistan, and Pakistani firms like Shan Foods thriving in Canada's market. "Pakistan and Canada are set for deeper economic collaboration," said Rana Ishaan. The meeting reaffirmed Pakistan's role as a trade hub.—APP

Pakistan reiterates  
climate commitment

Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr. Musadiq Malik called for streamlined climate funding mechanisms to support developing nations in meeting their sustainability goals

DNA

GENEVA: Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr. Musadiq Malik represented Pakistan at a high-level United Nations meeting in Geneva, emphasizing the country's vulnerability to climate change and urging stronger global financial cooperation to address environmental challenges. Speaking at the Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) session titled "Mobilizing Capital for Development in High-Risk and Neglected Markets," Malik highlighted Pakistan's disproportionate climate risks despite contributing less than 1% to global carbon emissions "Pakistan remains one of the most climate-affected countries, yet access to environmental financing remains a hurdle," Malik stated. He called for stream-



lined climate funding mechanisms to support developing nations in meeting their sustainability goals. The minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, including green growth, renewable energy expansion, and sustainable water management. "Climate justice is indispensable for global progress," he added, stressing that tackling environmental threats requires "global partnership and capital mobilization." The event, held alongside the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions' COP, brought together UN agencies, development organizations, and country representatives. Malik engaged in sideline consultations to advocate for stronger support for high-risk economies.

China leads world with  
over 1.57m AI patents

By 2025, the market size is expected to exceed 1 trillion yuan, and by 2035, it is expected to grow to 1.7 trillion yuan, with a compound annual growth rate of 15.6%, among which embodied intelligence and multimodal systems will become important growth points

BEIJING: The latest data shows that as of April 9, 2025, China's artificial intelligence (AI) patent applications have reached 1,576,379, accounting for 38.58% of the global applications, ranking first in the globe. China accomplishment in artificial intelligence stems from a synergistic interplay of domestic innovation ecosystems and proactive global collaboration, Xu Shan, Deputy Director of International Cooperation and Technical Service Department, CAICT AI Institute, told China Economic Net. At present, China has cultivated more than 400 national-level specialized "little giant" enterprises (innovation-driven small and medium-sized enterprises, which own core technologies in a niche market and show great market potential) in the field of AI, accounting for one-tenth of the global industry scale. By now, China has formed a complete artificial intelligence industry system covering the basic layer, framework layer, model layer, and application layer. China AI ecosystem leverages vertical integration across foundational research, application development, and market deployment, supported by a mature industrial infrastructure, Xu emphasized. Government-backed clusters like Shanghai to make itself highland for industrial innovation in AI, while targeted policies empower SMEs and startups to advance specialized fields such as robotics through niche innovations. Research and development in related fields has never stopped. Lately, China's independently developed new generation of intelligent CNC system was officially released. This is the world's first CNC system that integrates AI chips and AI large models. It can increase the operating accuracy of industrial mother machines by 30% on the basis of the original micron level, and the processing efficiency will also be increased by 5%-10%, which will drive China's industrial mother machines to accelerate their entry into the middle and high end of the industrial chain. The leap forward of our AI industry is inseparable from the timely support of the government, introduced Wu Jun, a member of the Chinese Computer Vision Expert Committee. While many countries were still waiting and watching, China had already quickly determined the overall development policy of AI. Therefore, the explosive development in the past few years should be said to be a natural process of quantitative to qualitative change. Wu Jun pointed out that the AI strategy could effectively cultivate new quality productive forces through domestic cross-industry collaboration. For instance, major e-commerce and social platforms rely on new information infrastructure and massive user data to deeply integrate big data analysis, algorithms, cloud computing to boost the intelligent upgrading of industries and form a virtuous circle. In 2024, the scale of China AI industry has exceeded 700 billion yuan, maintaining a growth rate of more than 20% for many consecutive years. By 2025, the market size is expected to exceed 1 trillion yuan, and by 2035, it is expected to grow to 1.7 trillion yuan, with a compound annual growth rate of 15.6%, among which embodied intelligence and multimodal systems will become important growth points.—DNA

Bangladeshi music  
stars to light up stage  
in Dammam

DHAKA: Some of Bangladesh's most popular artists are showcasing their pop culture to an international audience as they headline a cultural festival in Saudi Arabia this week. Organized by the Kingdom's General Entertainment Authority, the month-long event, "Your Passport to the World," is held in the city of Alkhobar in the Dammam metropolitan area. The festival, which began April 9, is focused on showcasing the rich cultural heritage of four countries: Sudan, India, the Philippines and Bangladesh. The last leg of the event, which began Wednesday, features Bangladeshi artists, with the lineup of musicians saying they are ready to put on a spectacular show in the Kingdom. "I am well-prepared now for the show. As a part of preparation, I have made some new compositions for some of my popular numbers as the audience will listen to my live performance for the first time," singer and composer Imran Mahmudul told Arab News. Mahmudul, who will perform in Dammam on Thursday and at another iteration of the festival in Jeddah on May 8, is performing for the second time in Saudi Arabia, after making his debut in 2023 at the Riyadh Season — an annual series of entertainment, cultural, and sporting events running in the Saudi capital throughout winter months. "That was a hugely good experience for me. More than half a million people enjoyed that show. Half of the audience couldn't enter into the show as it was fully packed. It's the biggest concert I have ever performed," he said. "It's a nice initiative to showcase Bangladeshi culture for the international audience." The 33-year-old heartthrob was looking forward to playing for some of Bangladesh's 3 million expats who are living and working in the Kingdom. "Most of the Bangladeshi crowd are very emotional, especially when they find the Bangladeshi stars at their places ... Whenever they get the opportunity to experience this kind of show with Bangladeshi stars, they don't miss it." For her first-ever live performance in Saudi Arabia, singer Dilshad Nahar Kona said she is looking forward to putting on a show for fellow Bangladeshis in the Kingdom. "I am feeling very proud to be a part of this grand event initiated by the Saudi government," Kona told Arab News. "With this initiative, I would be able to reach our people (Bangladeshis) in the Kingdom. It's a big initiative where Bangladesh will be showcased for 3 to 4 days. Definitely, it's a nice initiative by authorities in the Kingdom." DNA

UAE, Egypt sign MoU in 'significant  
milestone' for Arab space cooperation

The UAE delegation also attended the opening ceremony of the African Space Agency's new headquarters at Egyptian Space City, an event that drew senior officials, ministers and space-sector leaders from across Africa

DUBAI: The UAE and Egypt have signed a memorandum of understanding to boost collaboration in peaceful space activities, marking what Emirati officials described as a "significant milestone" in Arab space cooperation, state news agency WAM reported on Wednesday. The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the 11th meeting of the Arab Space Cooperation Group and

the "NewSpace Africa" conference in Cairo, with the UAE delegation led by Salem Butti Al-Qubaisi, director-general of the UAE Space Agency. "The MoU represents a significant milestone in Arab space cooperation and reflects the UAE's strategic vision, which sees space as a gateway to sustainable development, knowledge exchange and innovative solutions to shared

challenges," Al-Qubaisi said. He highlighted that partnering with Egypt reinforced the UAE's commitment to investing in people, localizing scientific expertise and developing a competitive, innovation-driven knowledge economy. He said that these goals aligned with broader regional ambitions for prosperity and stability. The MoU establishes a long-

term framework for cooperation in civil space programs, including the exchange of expertise, research and technology, and the implementation of joint projects supporting both countries' sustainable development goals. Planned areas of collaboration include communications technologies, satellite navigation and timing, Earth observation,

remote sensing, space situational awareness, remote asset management and R&D in emerging and advanced technologies. The UAE delegation also attended the opening ceremony of the African Space Agency's new headquarters at Egyptian Space City, an event that drew senior officials, ministers and space-sector leaders from across Africa.—APP

Meta  
launches  
AI App for  
social media  
platforms

ISLAMABAD: Meta is launching a new Meta AI app built with Llama 4, a first step toward building a more personal AI. People around the world use Meta AI daily across WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and Messenger, said a news release. And now, people can choose to experience Meta AI inside a standalone app. This release is the first version, and Meta is excited to get this in people's hands and gather their feedback. Meta AI uses Llama 4 to help users to solve problems, navigate daily questions, and better understand the world around. With the ability to search across the web, it can help get recommendations, deep dive on a topic, and stay connected with friends and family. Or if you're just looking to play around with it, it provides conversation starters to inspire your searches. And just like all Meta platforms, Meta built Meta AI to connect you with the people and things you care about. The Meta AI app includes a Discover feed, a place to share and explore how others are using AI. You can see the best prompts people are sharing, or remix them to make them your own. And as always, you're in control: nothing is shared to your feed unless you choose to post it. You'll find Meta AI across all Meta products and all the devices it runs on. So whether catching up with family on Facebook, chatting with friends on WhatsApp or Messenger, or scrolling Instagram, it's easily accessible wherever you need it. Meta AI on the web is also getting an upgrade. It comes with the new Discover feed, just like you see in the app. This continuity across the Meta AI app and the web helps deliver a more personal AI that can be there wherever you need it. The web interface has been optimized for larger screens and desktop workflows and includes an improved image generation experience, with more presets and new options for modifying style, mood, lighting and colors.—APP

China  
releases  
white paper  
on Covid-19

BEIJING: China's State Council Information Office on Wednesday issued a white paper titled "Covid-19 Prevention, Control and Origins Tracing: China's Actions and Stance." Apart from preface and conclusion, the document contains three chapters: "Contributing Chinese Wisdom to the Study of the Origins of SARS-CoV-2," "China's Contribution to the Global Fight Against Covid-19," and "The Mismanaged Response of the US to the Covid-19 Pandemic." According to the white paper, since the outbreak of Covid-19, China has consistently dedicated substantial resources to collaborative studies into the origins of the virus, involving both Chinese and international scientists.—APP

Technological  
advancements,  
industrial uplift  
reviewed

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Wednesday chaired a meeting with the Technology Upgradation and Skill Development Company (TUSDEC), to review progress on a six-point agenda focused on technological advancements and industrial development. During the meeting, TUSDEC presented its strategy for the Electronic Waste (E-Waste) Metal Recycling project in Gujranwala. The SAPM emphasized that metal recycling would play a crucial role in combating pollution in the country, said a news release. TUSDEC will provide services for the separation of ferrous and non-ferrous metals, which is expected to improve environmental management. The meeting discussed proposals for testing water quality without the use of bore wells, aimed at ensuring safer water sources for the country.—APP

RCCI signs MoU with Astana  
Chamber of Commerce

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A high-level Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony was held at the Islamabad Club under the patronage of the Ministry of Economic Affairs

between the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and the Astana Chamber of Commerce. The event took place on the sidelines of the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Intergovernmental Commission meeting and was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs

Mr. Ahad Cheema and Federal Secretary for Commerce Mr. Jawad Paul. RCCI President Mr. Usman Shaukat signed and exchanged the MoU on behalf of the Chamber with Mr. Kanat Alin, Head of the Astana Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The cere-

mony was graced by the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, as well as senior representatives from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Government of Kazakhstan. RCCI Vice President Mr. Fahad Barlas also witnessed the occasion.



## Briefs

Next US-Iran  
nuclear  
talks set for  
Saturday

IRAN and the United States will hold a fourth round of talks on the Islamic republic's nuclear programme in Rome on Saturday, Iran's foreign minister said. The longtime adversaries have held three rounds of talks aiming for a deal on the programme, which the West believes is intended to develop nuclear weapons – an allegation Tehran denies.

The talks, which began on April 12 and are mediated by Oman, are the highest-level contact in years between the two sides. "The next round of negotiations will take place in Rome," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said after a cabinet meeting on Wednesday. The top diplomat said Iranian officials would also meet on Friday with representatives from Britain, France and Germany – all parties to the 2015 nuclear deal. The deal called for the lifting of sanctions in exchange for curbing Iran's nuclear activities, but fell apart when Washington withdrew from it in 2018 during Donald Trump's first term as US president. After France threatened that the European trio could reimpose sanctions, Iran's UN mission said that "threats and economic blackmail" were "entirely unacceptable". "Genuine diplomacy cannot proceed under threats or pressure," the diplomatic mission said in a letter carried Wednesday by Iran's ISNA news agency. Trump sent a letter in March to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, urging talks and warning of possible military action if Iran refused. – Agencies

CB to hear  
review  
petitions on  
reserved seats

## COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday constituted a 13-member larger constitutional bench to hear review petitions filed against its earlier ruling on reserved seats. The bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, is set to convene on May 6 to take up the petitions. The formation of the full court underscores the significance of the case, which revolves around the contentious issue of the allocation of reserved seats. Besides Justice Aminuddin Khan, the bench comprises Justices Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Ayesha Malik, Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Musarrat Hilali, Hashim Kakar, Shahid Bilal, Salahuddin Panhwar, Aamer Farooq, and Baqar Najafi. It is pertinent to mention that the apex court, in its July 12 ruling, had ordered that the reserved seats in question be allocated to PTI. The upcoming hearing is expected to determine whether that decision will be upheld or revised.

Pak-SL defence  
dialogue  
concludes

## DNA

RAWALPINDI: 5th Round of Pakistan-Sri Lanka Armed Forces Defence Dialogue (AFDD) concluded here at Ministry of Defence from April 28-30. Pakistan delegation was led by Lt Gen Muhammad Ali, Hi(M) Retd, Secretary Defence while Sri Lankan delegation was headed by Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Sampath Thuyacontha, Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the Socialist Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka, said a press release issued here Wednesday. During the interaction, both sides reviewed the existing scope of bilateral defence collaboration and expressed satisfaction on the progress achieved under the umbrella of AFDD. Both leaders also exchanged views on regional security and common challenges being faced by both countries and showed their resolve to assist and support each other.

Shared global responsibility  
can tackle afghan refugee crisis

The discussion was organized by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) with participation from the Afghan business community based in Pakistan, representatives from the diplomatic community, and former envoys and regional experts

## NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador (retired) Asif Durrani underscored the complexity of the Afghan refugee situation in Pakistan, reminding all stakeholders that "this is not just Pakistan's responsibility - the international community must share the burden". He emphasized the need for a balanced approach, recognizing the distinction between security concerns and the legitimate presence of peaceful, long-settled Afghan businesspeople. Speaking at the Focus Group Discussion titled Policy Options for Balancing Expulsions & Rights of Afghans Born/Settled in Pakistan, Pakistan's former envoy for Afghanistan called for international cooperation, pointing out that the issue transcends national borders and reflects a broader humanitarian and political challenge that demands urgent multilateral attention. The discussion was organized by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) with participation from the Afghan business community based in Pakistan, representatives from the diplomatic community, and former envoys and regional experts. Ambassador Durrani said that the international acknowledgement that there is now peace in Afghanistan serves as a pull factor



for the repatriation of Afghans living in Pakistan. It is widely known that most Afghans here don't want to stay in Pakistan - they want to move to the US or Europe. However, after President Trump's policy changes, that pathway is now blocked, and they are stuck in limbo. While I sympathize deeply with the Afghan people, this is not just Pakistan's responsibility as a matter of fact - the international community must share

the onus. Therefore, the Afghans must raise their case at the international level, appealing to the broader international community to accommodate and help them, recognizing them as political refugees. Pakistan must do its part, but so should others. "Yes, this is a humanitarian crisis. Children born here should have the right to citizenship. But more than that, it is also the responsibility of the current Afghan

government to act responsibly, understand the gravity of the situation, and make efforts that help Afghans continue to live in Pakistan. If they continue supporting TTP, BLA, etc., how can Pakistan accommodate Afghans here? This has to be a quid pro quo - mutual cooperation. If we join hands, we can find a solution", he concluded.

Dr. Shoaib Suddle, Former Federal Tax Ombudsman and Former IG Police, noted that under international law, deportation is justified only on specific grounds: threat to public order, national security, espionage, terrorism, organized crime, overstaying a visa, or fraudulent asylum claims. Otherwise, it becomes a human rights issue. He added that Afghan businessmen contributing positively to the Pakistani economy and billions in taxes to the national exchequer should itself be a justification for allowing them to stay - that can even be a pathway to citizenship. While we cannot ignore the threat TTP poses, we must welcome businessmen and investors. We should make it easier for them to engage in business activities in Pakistan, as it is a high risk for them to conduct transactions through friends. Not everyone qualifies for citizenship, and even in US, birthright citizenship is being reconsidered. But where people are bringing money and investment, they should be treated as special cases.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani vows to  
deepen bilateral ties with Qatar

He noted that the long-standing and close people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and Qatar have continuously strengthened bilateral ties

## DNA

RABAT: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani has reiterated Pakistan's firm commitment to further deepening bilateral ties with Qatar in all areas, particularly in the political, economic, and cultural domains. He was talking to Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar, Dr. Hamda Bint Hassan Al-Sulaiti, who called on him in Morocco. During the meeting, the two sides discussed matters of mutual interest including bilateral relations, parliamentary engagement, investment, culture, trade, and peace in the Middle East. Chairman Senate said Pakistan attaches great importance to its brotherly and cordial relations with Qatar. He noted that the long-standing and close people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and Qatar have continuously strengthened bilateral ties. The Chairman Senate expressed keen interest in the upcoming visit of Amir of Qatar to Pakistan, terming it a significant opportunity to elevate bilateral ties to new heights. He also appreciated the efforts of Sheikhha Al Mayassa bint Hamad Al-Thani in organizing the "Manzar" exhibition in Pakistan, which showcased Pakistan's rich artistic and cultural heritage. Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani said that Qatar's involvement in initiatives such as 'Qatar Charity', the 'Qatar Fund for Development', and 'Education Above All' reflects

the close and growing affinity between the two countries. Stressing the need for expanding parliamentary diplomacy and holding consultative meetings between the two countries, Chairman Senate called for the signing of additional Memorandums of Understanding to facilitate these objectives. He also underscored the need to convene all institutional mechanism meetings-including the Joint Ministerial Commission, the Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment, and the Joint Committee on Labour-prior to the upcoming visit of the Amir of Qatar. The Chairman Senate said Pakistan is fully prepared to provide skilled human resources for Qatar's development in the sectors of IT, medicine, and infrastructure. During the meeting, Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar, Dr. Hamda Bint Hassan Al-Sulaiti, described Pakistan as a key country in the Muslim Ummah and highlighted the deep religious, cultural, and historical bonds between the two nations. She acknowledged the Pakistani diaspora's active role in contributing to Qatar's economic, social, and IT development. She appreciated Pakistan's efforts in promoting regional peace and its significant role in the fight against terrorism. The Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar said that her country seeks to further enhance parliamentary and people-to-people contacts with Pakistan and reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to continued mediation efforts for international harmony and regional peace.

US envoy urges de-escalation  
during meeting with FM Dar

ISLAMABAD: US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker met with Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar Wednesday to discuss the rapidly evolving regional situation, amid heightened tensions between Pakistan and India. According to Foreign Office Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan, the meeting focused on recent regional developments, with Deputy Prime Minister Dar reaffirming Pakistan's unwavering commitment to regional peace and security, while also making it clear that the country would continue to safeguard its national interests. The US side expressed a clear desire for de-escalation, said a State Department spokesperson, emphasizing that Washington is committed to maintaining contact with both countries as the situation unfolds. – DNA

Three dozen Palestinians killed  
in new Israeli massacre in Gaza

The World Food Programme (WFP) issued a stark warning over the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, amid continued Israeli bombardment and a blockade that has left civilians facing widespread hunger

## FOREIGN DESK

GAZA CITY: Nearly three dozen Palestinians, including children, have been killed in Israeli overnight attacks on the Gaza Strip, as the occupying regime continues its genocidal war in the besieged territory. Medical sources said at least 23 Palestinians had been killed in Israeli airstrikes targeting multiple areas of the Gaza Strip since dawn on Wednesday. According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, Israeli airstrikes have left 35 people dead and 109 others injured in the past 24 hours alone. The death toll from Israel's genocidal war on the besieged territory has now exceeded 52,400, with more than 118,014 others wounded since the genocidal war began in October 2023. The World Food Programme (WFP) issued a stark warning over the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, amid continued Israeli bombardment and a blockade that has left civilians facing widespread hunger. "The situation is very difficult in the Gaza Strip and our stocks are running out," a WFP spokeswoman said, adding, "We may see deaths from malnutrition as the crossings remain closed." The spokeswoman said around 700,000 people had been receiving meals each day, but the UN agency's trucks filled with aid remained stuck at the border, unable to enter due to the continued Israeli closure of crossings. The Israeli military renewed its airstrikes on the Gaza Strip on March 18, killing hundreds of people, injuring many others, and shattering the ceasefire agreement with the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas and the deal on the exchange of Israeli captives for Palestinian abductees.

Iran's top security  
official arrives in Brazil

TEHRAN: Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian has arrived in Brazil to hold talks with the Islamic Republic's fellow members in the BRICS group of emerging economies. While in Rio de Janeiro, Ahmadian will hold bilateral and multilateral meetings and negotiations with representatives of other member states of the 10-member intergovernmental organization, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported on Wednesday. These meetings and talks would be focused on security, political, and economic cooperation, as well as developments in West Asia, the report added, noting that discussions are expected to be held regarding security arrangements among BRICS member states. Brazil will hold the rotating presidency of BRICS in 2025, and meetings related to this significant international organization will be hosted by Brazil. Russia, Brazil, India, China, and South Africa are the founding members of BRICS, and Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Iran have also recently joined the group. The expanded BRICS group also has nine partner countries as affiliated members, including Bolivia, Cuba, Belarus, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Kazakhstan. – Agencies

Terrorists  
shedding  
blood on basis  
of national  
identity: CM

CM Bugti stressed the need to confront terrorism with a realistic understanding of ground realities

## DNA

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Saifraz Bugti has strongly condemned terrorist acts in the province, clarifying that terrorists targeted individuals based on national identity, not ethnic background. Speaking at the 15th national workshop, CM Bugti stressed the need to confront terrorism with clarity and a realistic understanding of ground realities. He said, "There's a difference between perception and reality when it comes to Balochistan, and every Pakistani must understand that." Dismissing the notion that unrest in Balochistan stems from uneven development, he argued that such issues are prevalent across Pakistan and the world, and should not justify any rebellion against the state. "Complaints about governance may be directed at governments, but Article 5 of the Constitution demands unconditional loyalty to the state," he added.

Pak-India  
tensions drag  
PSX down

## DNA

KARACHI: The bourse saw a sharp decline on Wednesday as geopolitical tensions escalated following a late-night warning from the federal government that India may launch a military strike within the next 24 to 36 hours. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index closed at 111,326.57 points, plunging by 3,545.61 points or 3.09% from the previous close of 114,872.18. The market had hit an intraday low of 110,631.84 points, marking a steep fall of 4,240.34 points, or 3.69%. Even the session's high of 114,066.12 reflected a decline of 806.06 points or 0.70%, underscoring the day's bearish momentum. "The market is reacting to the statement by the ministers that the next 24 to 36 hours could see nefarious actions from India," said Ahfaz Mustafa, CEO of Ismail Iqbal Securities. "This is causing people to flee to safety and exit the equities for the time being."

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