



Islamabad POST

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Chinese president to visit Russia on May 7-10: Kremlin

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Independence of journalism top priority: Atta

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National hero Arshad Nadeem visits IPSD

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Pahalgam incident

PM seeks neutral probe in call with the Malaysian PM

The two leaders also discussed bilateral relations and expressed a strong desire to deepen cooperation across multiple sectors, including trade, investment, and cultural exchange. Prime Minister Sharif conveyed his intention to undertake an official visit to Malaysia later this year to further enhance these ties

ABID RAZA / DNA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a telephone conversation today with the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, during which he conveyed Pakistan's serious concerns over escalating regional tensions stemming from India's provocative actions following the Pahalgam incident. The Prime Minister firmly rejected any attempts to link Pakistan to the incident without credible evidence and reiterated Pakistan's offer for an international, transparent, and impartial investigation to determine the facts. He also welcomed Malaysia's participation in such an inquiry. Reaffirming Pakistan's consistent stance against terrorism in all its forms, Prime Minister Sharif emphasized his country's frontline role in the global fight against terrorism and the heavy price it has paid in this endeavor. He noted that India's recent actions were diverting Pakistan's attention from critical counterterrorism efforts along its western border. Highlighting the country's recent progress, he underscored that it was inconceivable for Pakistan to become embroiled in such a controversy, especially as it emerges from a major economic crisis and works toward sustainable stability. The two leaders also discussed bilateral relations and expressed a strong desire to deepen cooperation across multiple sectors, including trade, investment, and cultural exchange. Prime Minister Sharif conveyed his intention to undertake an official visit to Malaysia later this year to further enhance these ties. The telephone call underscored the close friendship and mutual understanding between Pakistan and Malaysia, and both leaders agreed to remain in touch on regional and international developments.

DPM Ishaq Dar discusses regional developments with Malaysian FM

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Sunday held a telephone conversation with Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato Seri Mohamad Hasan. "The DPM/FM briefed him on the current regional developments. He categorically rejected India's provocative actions, including its baseless allegations, inflammatory propaganda, and its unilateral decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance—an outright violation of treaty provisions and international legal obligations," Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. He underscored Pakistan's commitment to regional peace and security while reserving the right to safeguard its sovereignty and national interest. Foreign Minister Hasan supported Pakistan's position and called for restraint by all parties. Both leaders agreed to maintain close contact on the evolving situation.

To improve diet

ADB support for food security to reach \$40 bln

Unprecedented droughts, floods, extreme heat, and degraded natural resources are undermining agricultural production, while at the same time threatening food security and rural livelihoods

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Sunday announced plans to expand its support to long-term food and nutrition security in Asia and the Pacific by \$26 billion, bringing its total funding for food security initiatives to \$40 billion over 2022-2030. The assistance will fund a comprehensive program spanning the entire food production process—from farming and processing—to distribution and consumption, according to ADB press release received here. Through financing and policy support for governments and companies, the program aims to help Asia and the Pacific generate diverse and nutritious food, create jobs, reduce environmental impacts, and promote resilient agricultural supply chains. "Unprecedented droughts, floods, extreme heat, and degraded natural resources are undermining agricultural production, while at the same time threatening food security and rural livelihoods," said ADB President Masato Kanda at

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SBP to keep policy rate on hold

Central bank likely to adopt wait-and-see approach ahead of IMF's \$7bn bailout review on May 9

DNA

KARACHI: In light of economic and geopolitical uncertainty coupled with inflation concerns, is expected to keep its key interest rate unchanged at 12% with analysts downplaying the chances of a shift until the budget for the next fiscal year (FY26) was announced and inflation risks became clearer, DNA reported on Sunday. Most analysts and surveys from major brokerage firms have predicted that the SBP, on Monday, would keep the policy rate on hold, while some forecast a reduction of 50 basis points (bps). However, few estimate that rates would be slashed by 100bps.

Iranian FM arrives today

This high-level visit reflects the deep-rooted and strong relationship between Pakistan and the brotherly nation of Iran

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, will undertake an official visit to Pakistan on 5th May 2025. This high-level visit reflects the deep-rooted and strong relationship between Pakistan and the brotherly nation of Iran. It also underscores the two countries' shared commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation across all areas of mutual interest. The two sides will also exchange views on regional and global developments. During the visit, Foreign Minister Araghchi will call on the President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. Pakistan and Iran enjoy close bilateral relations rooted in shared history, culture, and religion. The visit of Foreign Minister Araghchi is expected to further strengthen the existing ties and enhance cooperation between the two countries.

Adam Tugio writes for Daily Islamabad POST



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The article titled "The Decay of International Law" by Ambassador Adam Tugio has been published on the Op-Ed pages of the newspaper. Ambassador Tugio, who previously served as Indonesia's envoy to Pakistan, is widely recognized for his insightful commentary on international diplomacy and legal affairs. In his latest piece, he provides a critical analysis of the erosion of international legal norms and the increasing disregard for established principles of global governance. His article is a timely reflection on the challenges facing the rule of law in today's multipolar world and serves as a thought-provoking contribution to the ongoing discourse on international relations. - Editor



MUSCAT: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi arrives at the Ministry of Interior in Oman. Omani Interior Minister Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi warmly welcomed Minister Mohsin Naqvi. - DNA

Good news for MPs

Ministers' salaries up by 188%; Zardari issues Ordinance

Salary of a federal minister, minister of state and adviser increased to Rs 519,000

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has promulgated the Federal Ministers and Ministers of State (Salaries, Allowances and Privileges) Amendment Ordinance, 2025, increasing the monthly salaries of federal and state ministers by up to 188%. After the salary hike for members of parliament earlier this year, the federal cabinet in March also approved a significant increase in the salaries and allowances of its members. In its meeting on March 21, the federal cabinet approved the summary of the increase in the salaries of federal ministers and ministers of state. An amendment to the Federal Ministers and Ministers of State (Allowances and Salaries) Act, 1975 was approved. After the approval of the bill, the salary of a federal minister, minister of state and adviser will be Rs519,000. Earlier, the salary of a federal minister was Rs200,000 and that of a minister of state was Rs180,000, according to The News. Under the ordinance, federal ministers and ministers of state will receive salaries equal to those of members of the National Assembly (MNA). As per the ordinance, the Federal Minis-

ters and Ministers of State (Salaries, Allowances and Privileges) Act, 1975 has been amended. This ordinance will come into effect from January 1, 2025. In February, the lawmakers secured a massive 138% pay raise as the NA passed the Members of Parliament Salaries and Allowances (Amendment) Bill 2025 with a majority vote. The bill proposed raising parliamentarians' salaries from Rs218,000 to Rs519,000, aligning them with federal secretaries' pay. Ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmaker Romina Khurshid Alam tabled the bill, with neither opposition nor treasury lawmakers raising any objection to the whopping increase in their salaries. On January 26, the National Assembly's Finance Committee gave the bill a go-ahead in a meeting chaired by the National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq. Sworn political rivals from all parliamentary parties, including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), PML-N, and others, were on the same page regarding a massive increase in their salaries. It is pertinent to know that the Punjab Assembly, in December, had also unanimously approved a bill to

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Pahalgam attack Pakistan to brief UNSC on regional situation

Pakistan would especially highlight the illegal steps of India to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance

DNA

NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has directed Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations to take immediate steps for convening the session of United Nations Security Council (UNSC). According to the Foreign Office spokesperson, Pakistan has decided to formally brief the UN Security Council on the lat-

est situation in the region. "Pakistan will apprise the UN Security Council about the aggressive acts of India and its provocation and inflammatory statements," the statement said. It added that Pakistan would especially highlight the illegal steps of India to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance. "Pakistan will highlight the fact that India's aggressive actions are endangering the peace and security of South Asia and beyond the region," the spokesperson concluded.

PTI boycotts govt's briefing on security

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The main opposition party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has decided to boycott the government's briefing to political parties on the security situation scheduled for today. According to a statement issued by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf political committee, "Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has always condemned all forms of terrorism." In his messages to the nation, the PTI founder condemned terrorism and stressed the need for national unity and internal stability. In case of external aggression, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's supporters would be at the forefront, read the statement.



nations should be investing in regional peace and internal development. In a usual response, India blamed Pakistan for orchestrating the assault and circulated a dossier with its claims to over 30 friendly countries, seeking global condemnation. Predictably, Pakistan has rejected the accusation, calling it a "false flag operation" intended to deflect attention and create justification for India's aggressive policies. In a move that has drawn widespread concern, Indian authorities have threatened to unilaterally withdraw from the

THE recent militant attack in Pahalgam has dangerously reignited hostilities between India and Pakistan, deepening distrust at a time when both nations should be investing in regional peace and internal development. In a usual response, India blamed Pakistan for orchestrating the assault and circulated a dossier with its claims to over 30 friendly countries, seeking global condemnation. Predictably, Pakistan has rejected the accusation, calling it a "false flag operation" intended to deflect attention and create justification for India's aggressive policies. In a move that has drawn widespread concern, Indian authorities have threatened to unilaterally withdraw from the

A dangerous flashpoint demands unity, not war

OPINION

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

Indus Waters Treaty—a historic water-sharing agreement mediated by the World Bank in 1960. Though such a withdrawal is not legally feasible without global ramifications, the mere suggestion has serious implications. Pakistan, heavily reliant on these shared waters, has responded sharply, warning that any attempt to restrict or stop water flow could be considered an act of war. This war of words, if not carefully contained, could spiral into something far more dangerous. Both countries are nuclear-armed. The stakes are too high to ignore. Yet, history offers a sobering reminder: wars between India and Pakistan have never resolved the core issues between the two nations. From 1948 to Kargil in 1999, every conflict has left both countries poorer in peace, security, and stability. If anything, war has multiplied grievances, reinforced hardened positions, and imposed heavy costs on ordinary citizens on both sides of the border. At this critical juncture, Pakistan must exercise restraint and adopt a multifaceted strategy. While diplomacy remains the first and foremost tool for engagement, this crisis underscores the urgent

need for strengthening Pakistan's internal front. A strong, stable, and united Pakistan is the best deterrent against external pressure. Strengthening the economy must be a top priority. Pakistan cannot afford to enter any prolonged confrontation while its economic indicators remain vulnerable. A fragile economy undermines not only national security but also limits diplomatic maneuverability. Equally important is the need to bolster democratic institutions and uphold the rule of law. A resilient state rests on the legitimacy and functionality of its civilian governance structures. The stronger the institutions, the greater the confidence of the public and the international community in Pakistan's ability to navigate crises responsibly. Crucially, this is also a moment that demands national unity. The government and military establishment must work in tandem to ensure that the people of Pakistan are informed, engaged, and confident in their leadership. In times of external threat, it is the collective spirit of the nation that becomes the greatest weapon of all. A divided nation cannot effectively respond to provocations or

resist pressure—internal unity is as important as external diplomacy. This unity must extend to the political arena as well. The All Parties Conference (APC), which the government is reportedly considering to address the national security situation, will be incomplete and ineffective without the inclusion of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its leader, former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Regardless of political differences, PTI remains a significant political force with substantial public support. Excluding it from the APC would not only weaken the national front but also send the wrong message to both allies and adversaries—that Pakistan is politically fragmented at a moment when cohesion is critical. As a goodwill gesture and a step toward national reconciliation, Imran Khan should be invited to participate in the APC. His presence would symbolize political maturity and unity, signaling to the world that Pakistan can rise above internal rifts when the nation's integrity is at stake. Without PTI's participation, any declaration or consensus emerging from the APC would lack the moral and political weight necessary to guide Paki-

stan through this sensitive period. It is time to recognize political realities. PTI is not a fringe movement—it represents millions of voters. In moments of national challenge, every major stakeholder must be brought on board. A unified national stance strengthens Pakistan's hand diplomatically and ensures that any threat can be met with resilience, not rhetoric. At the heart of this crisis lies a simple truth: wars are not won by weapons alone. They are won by nations—by the collective will of a people, by economic strength, by unity of purpose, and by moral clarity. If Pakistan can bring together its institutions, political forces, and citizens under one flag and one vision, it will not only deter aggression but also chart a more secure and prosperous future. The Pahalgam attack is a flashpoint—but it does not have to be a trigger for war. Let it instead be a wake-up call for both nations to return to the negotiating table and address their issues with maturity, responsibility, and mutual respect. For Pakistan, this is a moment to consolidate strength—not by preparing for war, but by preparing for peace.

**Hot weather
forecast for
Sindh**

KARACHI: Pakistan Meteorological Department on Sunday predicted hot and dry weather in most districts of the Sindh province during the next 24 hours. However, partly cloudy weather in upper/central districts with rain-wind/thunderstorm may occur at isolated places in Sanghar, Umerkot, Matiari, Mithi, Thatta, Sukkur, Ghotki, Shikarpur, Chhor, Jacobabad, Larkana, Dadu, Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad, Khairpur and their surroundings. Mainly, hot and dry weather is likely to prevail in the province. —APP

**IBCC to end
rote learning
in Pak's
examination
system**

BAHAWALPUR: The Inter Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC) is actively working to eliminate rote learning from Pakistan's education system. In a significant step toward this goal, the IBCC on Sunday organized a one-day awareness seminar at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. The event was attended by Punjab's Provincial Minister for Irrigation, Mian Muhammad Kazim Pirzada, as the chief guest. Key participants included IBCC's Executive Director, vice chancellors from various universities, education experts from across the country, and representatives from examination boards. The seminar focused on replacing the traditional rote-based approach with a modern, research-driven assessment system. Experts emphasized the need to reform the examination structure to reflect critical thinking and practical understanding rather than memorization. Minister Pirzada stressed that the time has come to end rote learning in Pakistan, highlighting the importance of both ethical values and skills in education. Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah, Executive Director of IBCC, pointed out that meaningful reform in Pakistan's exam system is impossible without changing the current assessment methods. He added that teachers are being trained to adopt international standards in assessments. —APP

**SACM reviews
progress
on Lahore
Development
Program**

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Chief Minister (SACM) Punjab on Political Affairs Zeeshan Malik visited the Shalimar zone on Sunday and reviewed the progress of Lahore Development Programme. During the visit, officials from the Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL), Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), and other departments concerned briefed the SACM on the ongoing development initiatives in the area. Member Provincial Assembly Shoaib Siddiqui, Assistant Commissioner Shalimar Saqib Tarazi, along with local PML-N representatives and party workers, accompanied Zeeshan Malik during the visit. —APP

**Senator Shahzad hosts reception
for Japanese delegation**

Senator Dr. Shahzad waseem emphasized the importance of continued engagement and collaboration, highlighting that the visit reflects the growing international interest in Pakistan's dynamic and rapidly evolving technology landscape

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Senator Dr Shahzad Waseem hosted head of Japan IT delegation Ms. Wakako Sakurai, the former Ambassador of Japan Kuninori Matsuda along with their delegation, at his residence during their visit to Pakistan. The delegation is currently in the country to explore potential avenues of collaboration in the information technology sector, with a particular emphasis on engaging and employing Pakistan's talented pool of young IT graduates. During the meeting in-

**APNS demands immediate
withdrawal of PPRA Amend**

The APNS believes that the amendment aims to exclude the print media from the public procurement process and damages the transparency of government transactions: Sarmad Ali

DNA

KARACHI: The All-Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) has formally requested Chief Minister Punjab, Ms. Maryam Nawaz Sharif, to revisit and withdraw the amendment introduced in the Punjab Procurement Rules (PPRA) in October 2024, which bars the publication of tender

advertisements in newspapers. In a letter addressed to the Chief Minister, APNS President Senator Sarmad Ali highlighted that this decision has inflicted severe financial strain on the newspaper industry across Punjab and has also undermined long-standing government-media relations. The APNS believes that the amendment aims to exclude the print media from

the public procurement process and damages the transparency of government transactions. "Curtailling the publication of tender notices not only affects newspapers' revenues but also restricts the flow of crucial information to potential bidders," the letter stated. "This undermines public access to procurement opportunities and violates principles of transparency." The

Society emphasized that newspaper advertisements remain a critical tool for disseminating public information widely and equitably. Removing this access harms both the media and public participation in governance. Reaffirming its historic support for the Punjab Government — particularly during previous PML-N tenures — the APNS expressed hope that under Ms. Maryam

Nawaz's leadership, the current administration would reconsider the decision and restore publication rights for tender advertisements in print media. The APNS has called for the immediate withdrawal of the amendment, urging the Punjab Government to uphold transparency, support the media industry, and maintain strong press-government relations.

**SSCI fostering industrial
growth & social welfare**

President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) Peshawar Mr. Fazal Muqem Khanmeet with Executive Committee of Friends of Government College of Faisal (FGCCP) photo shows L-R Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, Muhammad Toufiq, SCCI President Fazal Maqem Khan, FGCCP Chairman Malik Amjad Hussain, Mr. Fazal Subhan & Mr. Tanveer Ahmad Nisar.

DNA

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Peshawar is not only making all out efforts for socio-economic uplift of the traders and industrialists but through its sub-committees, the SCC&I is also working for uplift of social welfare, arts and cultural sectors so that every citizen of Pak-homeland could be benefited from its outcome to the best possible level. This was disclosed by Mr. Fazal Muqem Khan, President SCC&I Peshawar while addressing a delegation the Executive Committee of a local organization namely Friends of GCCP

who called on him at his chamber today under chairmanship of Malik Amjad Ali. The delegation includes Mr. Mohammad Taufiq, Mr. Tanveer A. Nisar, Mr. Fazal Subhan, Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani & Mr. Mazhar Rahim. Mr. Fazal Muqem Khan, while appreciating aims and objects of the organization, said that welfare of the society, financial supports and scholarships to the deserving students and taking remedial measures to redress the burning grievances of a common man are great goals and the Chamber will support all-out support to ease achievements of these targets. He announced honorary membership for the Executive Commit-

tee members of FGCCP and assured that their nominations would also be made for participation in different seminars, conferences and delegations in future so that they could be benefitted from the latest updates for welfare of the society. He hoped that this unique organization of Senior Citizens would leave no stone unturned for serving the humanity in a better way for which they will always find the SCC&I supportive with them. Earlier, the delegation highlighted salient features and aims & objects of the organization and aimed that the mission of FGCCP would be accomplished with tremendous success through round the clock struggle.

for women. It will be a forum of debate and discussion and a centre for nourishment and development of local women engaging in business activities of any kind, they said and added that linkages and connections with the major stakeholders like government and its institutions is also an important feature. Ahmed Hassan Mattu, an executive committee member of GTCCI, said in a region which has been known for not encouraging the women, and the culture halts them from involving in economic activities, this organisation will surely boost the women youth to come and utilise their talent and skills for uplifting the society. He said initially the offices of Gujrat Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GtWCCI), have been set up at the upper floor of the building of GTCCI along the main GT Road.

**Women chamber
of commerce for
Gujrat approved**

MUNEER UR REHMAN

GUJRAT: The federal government has granted a formal approval for the establishment of the first-ever women chamber of commerce in Gujrat. "In exercise of the powers conferred by section 3 of the Trade Organisation Act 2013 the federal government's ministry of commerce, has granted licence to Gujrat Women Chamber of Commerce of Commerce and Industry to

represent the commerce, trade, industry and service sectors of Gujrat region," reads a notification. "This chamber aims to empower women socially and particularly economically which can only be done through a proper platform which has been achieved," said a senior official of Gujrat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GtCCI) while talking to Dawn here on Saturday. He said at least 130 women entrepreneurs had become the members of the women chamber and as per

the notification of DGTO, at least 16 members of executive committee were also nominated initially. Bilal Khan Pasha, director general trade organisation (DGTO), a regulator of trade organisations, handed over the licence to office-bearers of Gujrat women CCI being led by Saima Sarfraz in the presence of GtCCI President Bao Muneer Ahmed and others. The newly-appointed officials said the women CCI would promote entrepreneurial culture and create equal opportunities

**CCI President warns
against unlawful prop-
erty tax hike**

Says tax hike linked to local body elections

ISLAMABAD :President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Nasir Mansoor Qureshi has stated that two years ago, the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) had imposed a 400% increase in property tax, which was rejected and challenged by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in the Islamabad High Court. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani ruled that any increase in property tax would be subject to the holding of local government elections in Islamabad, thereby rejecting the hike. He further stated that CDA (Capital Development Authority) has no nothing to do with MCI's tax system and directed that permission must be sought from the court each month for withdrawal of funds for salaries. The court instructed the collection of property tax at old rates and ordered that all tax bills be corrected accordingly. However, the MCI Director Revenue has not complied with the court's decision and continues to collect bills based on the new rates. The bills submitted by ICCI have also not been corrected yet. President added that MCI now intends to once again raise the property tax, which amounts to contempt of court. If this happens, ICCI will approach the Islamabad High Court again. He further highlighted that many housing societies collect property tax themselves and do not even allow MCI's revenue department to operate within them. —APP

**Islamabad's food scene thrives
despite rainy weekend**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the weekend, families and youngsters flocked to Islamabad's public parks, open spaces, hilly areas and food eateries, enjoying the lively atmosphere, taking snaps and savoring the taste of seasonal summer foods. According to a report by a private news channel, the weekend rush in Islamabad's recreational spots was particularly notable, with families and friends gathering to enjoy the pleasant weather and indulge in summer treats, showcasing the city's vibrant social scene. To residents, Islamabad's eateries buzzed with activity despite the rain, as foodies and families flocked to popular spots to indulge in seasonal treats and tradi-

tional favorites, making the most of the weekend's culinary delights.

The report further highlighted that the city's popular eateries were buzzing with activity, serving a variety of traditional and modern summer delicacies that attracted foodies and families alike, adding to the festive atmosphere of the weekend.

Restaurant and food stall holders expressed mixed views about the impact of intermittent rain on their weekend sales, with some reporting a slight dip in customers, while others noted that the rain actually boosted sales of hot and comforting summer treats, such as tea, kebabs, and traditional desserts. "The rain did not affect our sales much," said owner of a popular food stall in F-6 Markaz, "In fact,

people seemed to enjoy our hot and spicy dishes even more on a cool weekend evening. Citizens reveled in the weekend's laid-back atmosphere, indulging in their favorite summer treats. "There is nothing like sipping on a cold drink and enjoying some crispy golgappay on a warm weekend evening," said, a young professional, smiling as he walked out of a popular eatery in Islamabad's commercial hub. Similarly, a mother of two, appreciated the variety of seasonal food options available, "My kids love trying different flavors of falooda and kufi, it is become a weekend tradition for us." "I am so glad it rained on the weekend, it made the weather perfect for trying out all the hot spots in Islamabad," said a food enthusiast.

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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

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& Rescue Services.4451122

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Motorway Police.9270601-20

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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

CDA honors firefighters with safety drills awareness campaign

Member Administration, Talat Mahmood reiterated the CDA’s commitment to upgrading firefighting services to international standards, in line with Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa’s vision for a safer Islamabad. “A well-equipped fire brigade is essential for disaster response, and we are working to ensure our teams have the best resources,” he added

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) marked International Firefighters’ Day with a ceremony at the Emergency and Disaster Management (E&DM) Headquarters, featuring rescue drills, a public awareness walk, and a flag march to recognize firefighters’ sacrifices and service. Islamabad honors firefighters with safety drills awareness campaign CDA Member Administration Talat Mahmood, the chief guest, praised firefighters for their bravery and professionalism. “Our firefighters demonstrate unwavering commitment and skill in emergencies, risking their lives to protect others,” he said. Islamabad honors firefighters with safety drills awareness campaign Their service is invaluable, and we must continue to support them with modern training and equipment.” The event included a mock fire and rescue operation, demonstrating emergency response procedures, while an awareness walk urged residents to install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers at home. Officials emphasized the need for better public preparedness to reduce fire-related risks. Mahmood reiterated the CDA’s commitment to upgrading firefighting services to international standards, in line with Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa’s vision for a safer Islamabad. “A well-equipped fire brigade is essential for disaster response, and we are working to ensure our teams have the best resources,” he added. The ceremony highlighted the critical role of firefighters in urban safety and honoured their dedication to the community. Authorities urged citizens to co-operate with fire prevention efforts to minimize hazards.



Members of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and fire department officials participated in a safety drill and awareness campaign. The image shows firefighters in orange uniforms standing next to a fire truck, with various firefighting equipment displayed on a table in the foreground.

Police rescue Azlan, arrest female kidnapper

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police successfully recovered a three-year-old child, Azlan, son of Faisal Ali Rana, who had been abducted from Centaurus Mall, located in the jurisdiction of Margalla Police Station, within a remarkably short span of time. ICT Police rescue 3-year Azlan, arrest female kidnmediaer from Centaurus Mall An official told media on Sunday that the child, Azlan a resident of Sector B-17, Islamabad, was traced using advanced technology, including Safe City cameras, along with human intelligence. This led to the immediate arrest of the female kidnmediaer, who had been previously involved in several child abduction cases. ICT Police rescue 3-year Azlan, arrest female kidnmediaer from Centaurus Mall He said the woman is currently under investigation, and further revelations are expected in the case. Following the recovery, the child was safely reunited with his parents, who were deeply relieved and overwhelmed with joy. ICT Police rescue 3-year Azlan, arrest female kidnmediaer from Centaurus Mall SSP Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) facilitated a video call between the child and his parents, allowing them to see their son after his safe return. The parents expressed heartfelt gratitude towards the Islamabad Police for their swift action. Azlan’s father, Faisal Ali Rana, thanked the Islamabad Police for their swift and professional response. He praised the officers for recovering his son in such a short time and mediarecited their tireless efforts. Inspector General of Police (IG) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, visited the DIG Islamabad office to personally meet the recovered child. During this meeting, the IG Rizvi praised the collaborative efforts of the officers, including DIG Tariq , SSP Operations, SSP Investigation, SSP CTD, and SP CIA. Additionally, IG Rizvi commended CIA Incharge Suleman Shah and his team for their exceptional work in this case. IG announced cash rewards and commendation certificates for all officers involved in the operation. IG Rizvi expressed pride in the professionalism and dedication of the Islamabad Police teams. He said, “My team has solved dozens of major cases over the past year in a professional manner.—DNA

Beggary turning into a growing nuisance

ISLAMABAD:Amidst repeated action against beggars by Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration, the city continues to witness a rise in beggars’ number at its streets, markets and traffic intersections. In most of areas of main city and housing societies in the suburbs, they are seen in abundance with scores among them are permanent and professional seeming like to be part of a nexus operating in the city. Some residents have pointed out that many of these permanent beggars are travelled to designated places daily in the morning and picked up in the evening by their masters after day long begging in these areas. Particularly busy areas like F-6, F-7, F-10 Markaz, capital’s main traffic signals and housing societies along Islamabad Expressway including PWD, Police Foundation and Pakistan Town commercial areas have witnessed a surge in beggars including women and children, soliciting money from commuters and shoppers. Expressing concerns on prevailing situation, the residents have demanded strict enforcement of anti-begging laws, arguing that unchecked beggary not only tarnishes Islamabad’s reputation but also resulting in petty crimes. They are also perturbed on re-emergence of beggars groups after a couple of days of action by ICT administration who occasionally launch operation against these beggars, nab them and put behind the bars But, this practice could not prove to be a permanent solution to this menace as there are also reports that many rag pickers conduct recee in different areas during the day that leads to theft and robbery after sunset. Citizens in many localities have expressed frustration over frequent encounters with organized groups of beggars as well as the crimes like snatching or plundering valuables and breaking into houses, also threatening human lives. “Once regarded as

one of the most orderly and serene cities in South Asia, Islamabad is now grumbling with a persistent and increasingly visible challenge of beggary,” remarked a businessman, Saleem Khan. “From traffic signals to bustling markets, the city’s thoroughfares are teeming with individuals with many of them seeming like part of organized groups or an unseen nexus operating in the city,” Saleem Khan said. “Some of them aggressively seek alms and when refused either they abuse you or scratch your vehicles and run away.” Since they are professional engaged in this notorious practice for years, they have numerous techniques to allure people. “Their techniques range from sympathetic women holding infants, children selling flowers, some knocking windows of your car and some elderly begging for medical treatment or marriage of their daughters,” said Aiman Baig, a working woman. “Some among them are too sticky and arrogant and

also pass derogatory remarks when refused alms.” She said, whether it is intersection at Aabpara, traffic-laden Jinnah Avenue or other areas in the city, you can find them everywhere. Amina Raftag, a local resident describes it as very uncomfortable and says, “even if you desire to help someone needy, you cannot ascertain who is genuinely deserving and who belongs to a nexus.” She mentioned to beggars mediaroching her children for money on their way to school. “Although it is heartbreaking to see people in such a state yet the same time we fear if they could be part of a criminals group.” As citizens daily confront them, the situation does not go unattended with the administration off and on tracking down these beggars. “We are aware of this issue. Operations are being conducted regularly to remove professional beggars,” said an official of Islamabad Police. “Besides putting them behind the bars, we also counsel them.—DNA

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DG Hajj mission pledges best services for Pilgrims

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Pakistan Hajj Mission Director General Abdul Wahab Somro said on Sunday that Pakistani pilgrims continue to arrive in Madinah Munawwarah as per schedule, thanks to seamless flight operations and exceptional arrangements by Saudi authorities, relevant departments and the mission. The Director General (DG) of Pakistan’s Hajj Mission while in an interview with Radio Pakistan’s program assured that pilgrims will enjoy a seamless journey, pledging to provide the best possible services for Pakistani pilgrims, ensuring a smooth and hassle-free experience for them. The Pakistan Hajj Mission, in close collaboration with Saudi authorities

has undertaken meticulous planning to ensure seamless facilitation for pilgrims throughout their entire journey, he added. The DG highlighted significant upgrades in facilities under the Government Hajj Scheme this year, noting the continuation of the popular Short Hajj package, which was introduced last year and has proven to be a success. “Pilgrims can now select accommodations tailored to their needs, with options for two-bed and three-bed rooms, especially designed to cater the need of family requirements,” according to the DG. The Hajj Mission has secured around 93,000 beds for Pakistani pilgrims, with notable amenities including sofa beds and personal storage shelves in Mina, a first in Pakistan’s Hajj history, as highlighted

by Abdul Wahab Somro, enhancing pilgrims’ comfort and convenience. The government has prioritized value-added services for pilgrims, leveraging modern technology, including mobile medicalications to enhance their experience, he added. This focus on innovation has improved services and efforts to ensure smooth flights for pilgrims continue, further streamlining their journey, he mentioned. Meanwhile, Pakistani pilgrims are leveraging technology to enhance their spiritual experience, offering Nawafil at the esteemed Riaz-ul-Jannah through the Saudi Arabia’s Nusuk media, while the authorities continue to ensure seamless travel arrangements, with smooth flights remaining a top priority for the comfort and convenience of the pilgrims.—APP

Classical music mesmerizes PNCA audience

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) echoed with the timeless strains of South Asian classical music on Saturday evening, as a spellbinding concert organized by the Ahang-e-Khusrawi Classical Music Heritage Trust (CMHT) drew a packed house of music enthusiasts. The event, aimed at preserving and promoting Pakistan’s rich classical music heritage, attracted a diverse audience comprising diplomats, students, artists, and connoisseurs of classical traditions. It was a night steeped in melody, spirituality, and cultural pride. The evening opened with a mystical choral rendition of “Allah Hoo Allah Jallay Shaan Allah”, performed by the students of the Trust, including Afsa, Amaan, Sara, and Ahmad. Their harmonious voices set a reverent and spiritual tone, instantly drawing the audience into a world of devotion and musical serenity. This was followed by a breathtaking instrumental performance featuring renowned flutist Salman Adil and tabla maestro Sarfaraz Anwar. Their seamless interplay and nuanced improvisations captivated listeners and drew resounding medialause. Santoor artist Ali Raza delivered a compelling solo, his performance marked by intricate phrasing and rhythmic elegance, beautifully complemented by tabla accompaniment. In the vocal segment, classical singer Hassan Abbas enthralled the audience with his rendering of a soulful raag, blending technical mastery with emotive expression. Sarfaraz Anwar returned to the stage—this time as a vocalist—to present a powerful rendition of Raag Darbari, leaving a deep emotional impact on the listeners. One of the most memorable moments of the evening was a spellbinding classical dance performance by acclaimed dancer Nighat Chaudhry. Her expressive interpretation of Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s revolutionary poem “Hum Dekhain Gey” merged poetry, music, and movement into a stirring tribute that earned a huge mediareciation. Reflecting on the Trust’s journey, President Iftikhar Rasheed shared his humble beginnings in 2003. “Six of us contributed Rs. 100,000 each to establish this nonprofit initiative dedicated to supporting classical musicians and offering free or subsidized music education,” he said. Highlighting present challenges, he added, “Today, only three active trustees remain. We urgently need support from the corporate sector and the public to sustain this noble mission. Pakistan is full of raw talent—if we don’t nurture it, we risk losing a vital part of our cultural identity.” Director General PNCA, Muhammad Ayoub Jamali, lauded the Trust’s dedication and pledged institutional backing, including free music education facilities for underprivileged students. “In these difficult times, such unwavering commitment to classical arts is truly inspiring,” he noted. Chairman of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Saleem Baig, praised the transformative power of music and described musicians as “social engineers who heal hearts through their art.—DNA

Civil society role vital for combating terrorism

ISLAMABAD: In the modern and presence of sophisticated weaponry and communication modes, terrorism has emerged as the most lethal threat to integrity of countries and safety of their people. It is not a threat to countries and regions but globally and demands a multidimensional role of political governments, security institutions and civil society to eliminate this scourge in all its forms and manifestations. Therefore, the dream of achieving durable peace cannot be materialized unless and until all the relevant stakeholders make collective efforts in defeating terrorism that is threatening our social fabric. “Terrorism is a known unlawful act of using force or violence to intimidate or coerce a government or people and damage national fabric for furthering the agenda of destabilization,” said Prof. Dr Jamil Khan, Director Centre of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Peshawar. Terming complete elimination of terrorism a complex riddle, he said, “it requires a comprehensive response of civil society, academics, religious scholars, media and other stakeholders.” He said, traditionally the states are thought to be on the forefront to curb terrorism but in modern age it is increasingly recognized that not the governments alone but other segments also have a key role to play in eliminating terrorism. “Besides actions of security forces, the role of civil society can also be a way forward to address the causes of terrorism like radicalism, illiteracy and socioeconomic imbalances,” he said. “As civil society components largely operate independently and flexibly, they can better engage communities for forging unity against inimical forces.” He said constructive role of civil society can also play role in upbringing a generation that dislikes terrorism and when reaching adolescent, this generation will have a clear vision about terrorism and avoid falling into hands of terrorists. “A gradual process of countering radicalization, negativity and pessimist thinking through community engagements and promoting counter-narratives, can definitely have positive results,” Dr Jamil said. He said social media had badly affected ‘hujra culture’ in KP. “Today our youth is more influenced by social media than the saner voices of their elders as they spend lesser time with them. “If properly integrated, our civil society, ulema, teachers and parents can collectively encourage community resilience against extremist ideologies by building trust between state and citizens,” he said. Highlighting importance of community engagement, Ashfaq Khan, Deputy Commissioner Kurram said that after peace jirga on January 1, 2025, over 979 bunkers were demolished and weapons surrendered with the cooperation of both parties.—DNA

9th Int’l Water Conference to be held

ISLAMABAD: The 9th International Water Conference on “Emerging Technologies for Water Security and Socio-Economic Development” will be held from May 6–7 at OIC-COMSTEC Secretariat Islamabad. The two-day global event will gather researchers, practitioners, academicians, and policymakers from around the world to address critical issues related to water management and sustainability. Organized by COMSTEC in collaboration with the Riphah Institute of Public Policy, the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), Water Aid and the University of Haripur, the conference will provide a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange and collaborative dialogue, said a press release issued here Sunday. The attendees will engage in academic presentations, interactive panel discussions, and specialized technical sessions. Over 80 scholarly papers will be presented under diverse sub-themes, including Environment and Climate Change, Food and Agriculture, Glaciology and Snow Hydrology, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), Circular Water Economy, Policy and Governance, and Artificial Intelligence for Water Security. The conference aims to foster in-depth discussions that will inform policy and practice, stimulate cross-sectoral collaboration, and promote innovative media-roaches for the sustainable management of water resources. Proceedings and a detailed post-conference report will be published to capture key insights, research findings, and actionable recommendations for long-term impact.—APP

IGP extends financial assistance to ailing head constable

ISLAMABAD:Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi held a meeting in his office with Head Constable Umar Daraz and provided financial assistance of Rs 150,000 for his spinal treatment, taking personal interest in the case. IGP Rizvi extends financial assistance to ailing head constable A public relations officer told media on Sunday that IGP Rizvi is actively pursuing various measures to ensure the welfare of police officers and officials. On this occasion, the IGP Rizvi said the financial support would not only assist in the treatment of the Head Constable but also convey a strong message that the police department stands by its personnel in times of need. He further said, “Every officer and official of the police force is a valuable asset, and their welfare is our top priority.” Head Constable Umar Daraz expressed his heartfelt gratitude to IGP Rizvi for the generous assistance, saying that such gestures boost the morale of the force.—APP

Briefs

Heatwave fuels surge in Air Cooler sales in twin cities

ISLAMABAD: The scorching heatwave gripping the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi has led to a significant spike in sales of air coolers, with retailers reporting a surge in demand over the past few weeks. As temperatures soared, residents of the twin cities flocked to markets to beat the heat, resulting in a substantial increase in air cooler sales. Retailers estimate that sales have risen by up to 50% compared to the same period last year. Retailers were optimistic about continued sales, with some offering discounts and promotions to attract more customers.

Saqib, a retailer in Islamabad's F-7 market said they were offering a 10% discount on all air cooler models, and also providing free installation. "We have never seen such a high demand for air coolers in the past saying that the heatwave has been relentless, and people are willing to invest in anything that can provide relief from the heat," he stated. He added as the heatwave shows no signs of abating, residents of the twin cities were likely to continue relying on air coolers to beat the heat adding that with demand expected to remain high, they were gearing up to meet the needs of their customers. A retailer at a popular electronics market in Rawalpindi said "Summer months see a massive surge in air cooler sales, fueled by growing demand". "We see a surge in sales of air coolers from April to September, with peak demand in June and July," he said. He said prices of air coolers range from ? 15,000 to ? 50,000, depending on the brand, model, and features. They offer a range of air coolers, from basic models starting at ? 15,000 to high-end models with advanced features like inverter technology and honeycomb cooling pads, which cost up to ? 40,000, he added. They are seeing a trend towards DC-powered air coolers, which are more energy-efficient and cost-effective in the long run," he told.—APP

1896 hardcore criminals mediarehended under NAP

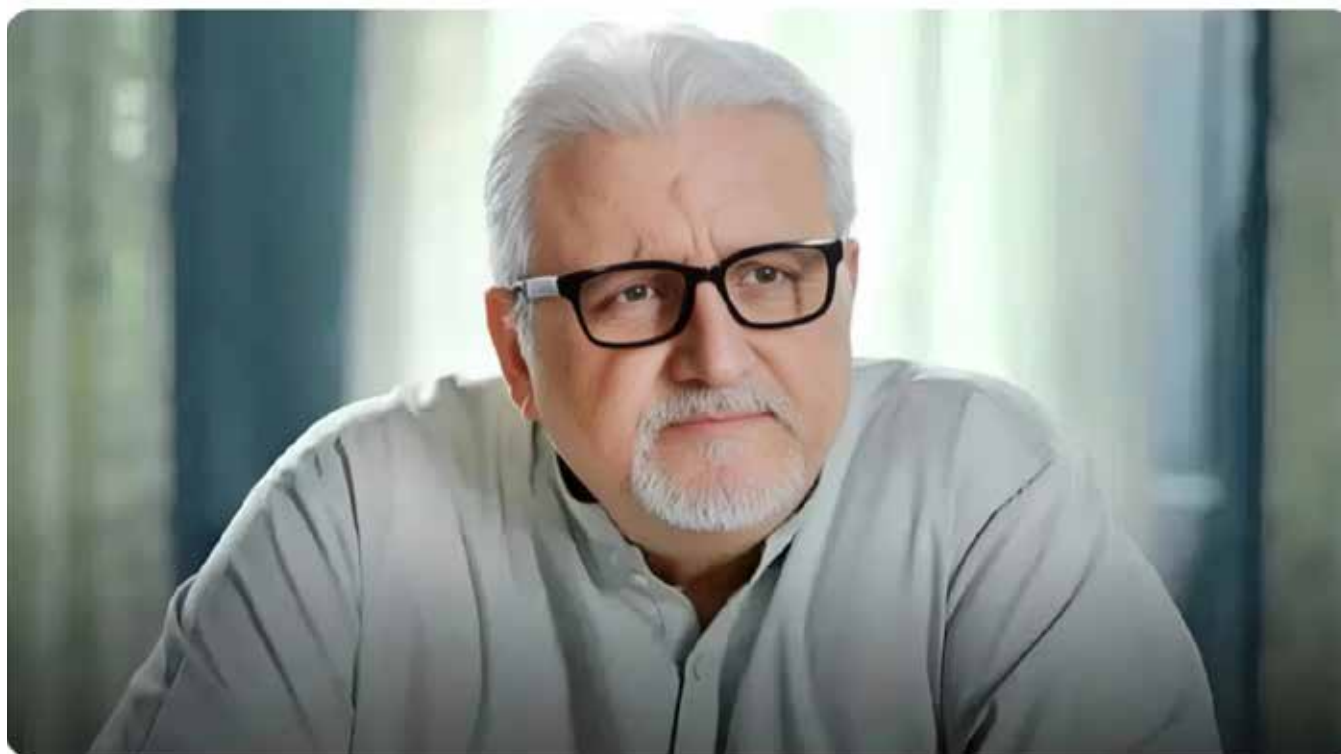
RAWALPINDI: In a major crackdown under the National Action Plan (NAP), Rawalpindi Police have arrested 1,896 hardcore criminals this year in an effort to prevent crime and maintain law and order. According to City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani, 436 cases were filed for violations of the Tenancy Act. Additionally, 560 people were arrested for possessing illegal firearms and were sent to jail. The police also arrested 932 drug dealers involved in the illegal trade of substances such as ice, heroin, hashish, and narcotic pills, with a value running into millions of rupees. This intensified action launched on the special instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. The crackdown is being carried out in Rawal Town, Potohar, and Saddar Circles. "Security forces, along with Dolphin Force, Elite Force, women police officers, and other law enforcement agencies, are searching houses, shops, hotels, restaurants, and guest houses," he said and added that data of tenants was also being registered under the Tenancy Act. He said that dozens of violators had been booked for disturbing public peace under the Public Life Maintenance Order and the Loudspeaker Act.—APP

Khaled joins Niaz Support as global goodwill ambassador

Niaz Support is also a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the USA, with a growing global footprint

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Niaz Support is proud to announce the appointment of celebrated actor, singer, and producer Khaled Anam as its Global Goodwill Ambassador. With this announcement, Anam joins a prestigious roster of ambassadors that includes squash legend Jahangir Khan, renowned singer and philanthropist Abrar Ul Haq, corporate trainer and certified life coach Azam Jamil, and former Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan. Khaled Anam's career spans over four decades, making him a household name in Pakistan's entertainment industry. Known for his commitment to culture, inclusion, and social development, he has long used his voice and influence to advocate for



meaningful change. His addition as a goodwill ambassador brings a deep resonance to Niaz Support's mission. "I'm privileged to join Niaz Support," said Khaled Anam. "Their transformative, volunteer-driven model - providing customised wheelchairs and creating employment for persons with disabilities - is truly inspiring. I'm excited to help amplify their voice for inclusion and dignity for PWDs in Pakistan." "Khaled Anam's appointment reflects our commitment to building bridges between advocacy, awareness, and action. His voice will inspire greater awareness and empathy for the disability community - both in Pakistan and beyond," said Fatima Mudassir, Honorary Director, External Relations at Niaz Support. Founded by award-winning social entrepreneur Hussain Odhwani, Niaz Support is Pakistan's first social gifting platform and social enterprise, providing customised wheelchairs and creating jobs for persons with disabilities. After three years of transforming thousands of lives through mobility, it continues to build a movement rooted in inclusion, empowerment, and dignity. Niaz Support is also a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the USA, with a growing global footprint.

Bakhtawari welcomes decline in consumer index

He appealed to the business community, industrial associations, chambers of commerce, public representatives, and economic experts across the country to raise a united voice for lowering interest rates and electricity prices to increase pressure on government policy-making

DNA

ISLAMABAD: DMember Central Core Committee United Business Group (FPC-CI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, welcomed the unusual decline in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in April 2025, stating that the time has come to immediately reduce the interest rate to 8% and bring down the electricity tariff to Rs. 26 per unit to provide real relief to the economy. He termed the annual inflation rate of 0.3% a major milestone in Pakistan's recent economic history and said that it is now imperative to translate this opportunity into policy reforms. He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of the

business community. Ahsan Bakhtawari stated that the 0.3% inflation rate recorded in April 2025 is a historic event, marking the lowest level in decades. This is a clear indication that the prices of essential items such as food and electricity have decreased significantly, offering temporary relief to the general public. However, he emphasized that this improvement must now be converted into sustainable economic relief. He strongly criticized the current interest rate of 12%, calling it contradictory in light of the 0.3% inflation and a core inflation rate of 7.4%. He argued that when inflation has dropped to such a low level, bringing the policy rate down to single digits is both economically logical and

essential for policy coherence. Reducing the interest rate to 8% would stimulate investment, lower borrowing costs, and accelerate economic activity. He also expressed serious concerns about high electricity rates, saying that they are not only hurting industrial production but also severely impacting the purchasing power of ordinary consumers. He suggested that electricity rates should be reduced to Rs. 26 per unit to provide relief to businesses, boost exports, and maintain the recent success in controlling inflation. He warned that if this opportunity is not seized, the country could face industrial stagnation, unemployment, and economic slowdown despite the temporary dip in inflation.

Now is the time for policymakers, the State Bank, and the Ministry of Finance to take bold and realistic decisions to steer the economy toward sustainable growth. Ahsan Bakhtawari stressed that the government must implement reforms in the energy sector, reduce circular debt, and lower production costs to help Pakistan gain competitive advantage in global markets. He appealed to the business community, industrial associations, chambers of commerce, public representatives, and economic experts across the country to raise a united voice for lowering interest rates and electricity prices to increase pressure on government policy-making.

Distorted tax regime hampers pharma sector growth: BMP

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has asked the economic managers of the country to eliminate tax discrimination between different categories of medicines in the upcoming budget 2025-26. In its budget proposals it called for applying a uniform 1% sales tax rate on all medicines—whether allopathic, homeopathic, or herbal—to ensure fairness, accessibility, and consistency in healthcare taxation. The issue was discussed in detail during the meeting between Mian Anjum Nisar and a delegation from the Homeopathic Pharmaceutical and Chemist Association Pakistan (HPCAP), who met him in the lead of Dr. Amanullah Bismil, Patron-in-Chief of the HPCAP on Saturday. The delegation included Dr. Ahsan Waris, Dr. Iqbal Hanif, Dr. Kashif Masood, and Saifurrahman Safi. The representatives shared their concerns regarding the unequal taxation structure, highlighting how it discourages the growth of the alternative medicine industry and limits consumer access to affordable treatment options. Chairman of the Businessmen Panel and former FPCCI president Mian Anjum Nisar pointed out that a significant disparity currently exists in the taxation system governing pharmaceutical and health-related products. Allopathic medicines—conventional pharmaceutical drugs—are taxed at a concessional rate of 1%, while homeopathic and herbal medicines are subject to a hefty 18% general sales tax (GST). This difference, he argued, is unjust and harmful, creating a disproportionate burden on consumers and manufacturers of non-allopathic medicines. "The current tax system promotes inequality within the healthcare sector," Anjum Nisar said. "On the one hand, the government claims to prioritize public health and affordability; on the other hand, it penalizes manufacturers and users of homeopathic—DNA

RCCI calls for immediate interest rate cut to stimulate industrial growth

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has urged the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to immediately reduce interest rates to single digits in a bid to stimulate industrial activity and drive sustainable economic growth. RCCI President Usman Shaukat emphasized that the prevailing interest rate of 12% is significantly hampering business growth and must be lowered as the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) prepares to meet on May 5. "Pakistan currently maintains the highest interest rate regime in the region," said Mr. Shaukat. "This has made local industries uncompetitive and discouraged both domestic and foreign investment. We urge the MPC to take bold.—APP

Pak to enhance exports to China from Northern areas

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pak-China Border Trade Zone, Tashkurgan has agreed over a mechanism with Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) traders to step up Chinese investment in the region and enhance exports from the border areas to China. This was stated by Raja Mir Nawaz Mir, President Ghizer Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in an interview with Gwadar Pro. Raja said that in April, a delegation of traders from 10 districts of GB paid a 6-day long visit to Tashkurgan Border Trade Zone, fol-

lowed by a visit of Chinese investors led by the Border Trade Zone Chairman Chen Hao to Hunza Chamber of Commerce and Industry. During the visits, several MoUs were signed including an important agreement between GB traders and the Border Trade Zone authorities to streamline Chinese investment in the region, Raja, who led the delegation, said. Raja said that under the agreement, investors from GB and other regions of Pakistan will identify viable projects in GB for joint venture with Chinese investors; provide land and other facilities, while the Border Trade Zone will connect them

with Chinese investors for potential projects. "The Tashkurgan Border Trade Zone has a list of 50,000 Chinese investors willing to invest in GB", Raja said. He added that it is part of a broader plan of the Chinese government to uplift the cross-border communities along the China-Pakistan border. Raja said that Pakistani investors will require guarantee from any chamber of commerce in GB while the Border Trade Zone will provide guarantee of the Chinese investors. The potential JVs will also have shareholding by GB chambers, he added. Moreover, the GB traders have been allocated a separate section with a corporate office, display centre and residential apartment in the Border Trade Zone. This will enhance trade with China as well as 18 other regional countries, who also have a separate section in the Zone, he said.

The Mask of Modesty: When piety becomes oppression

NAIRA ESHAAL

It is often said that among all forms of arrogance, the most dangerous is that which hides behind false humility and piety. In today's society, we frequently encounter individuals who outwardly appear religious and modest—dressed simply, quoting religious texts, speaking gently—yet their actions betray hypocrisy. They treat the weak with contempt and reserve their best behavior for those in power. True piety (taqwa), as emphasized in the Qur'an, is not self-proclaimed: "Do not claim yourselves

to be pure. He is most knowing of who fears Him." (Surah An-Najm 53:32) These individuals, despite their outward religiosity, harm others through their actions and words. They remain silent in the face of injustice, enabling wrongdoers by their inaction. Often, their silence is louder than any voice of protest and contributes to the erosion of social justice. The Prophet Muhammad taught that a true Muslim is one from whose tongue and hands others are safe. (Sunan al-Nasa'i, 4998) Unfortunately, society tends to side with the powerful—even when they are wrong—and turns a blind eye to the suffering of the weak. The

voiceless often endure in silence, shedding tears no one sees. But Allah sees, hears, and records it all: And your Lord says, 'Call upon Me; I will respond to you.' (Surah Ghafir 40:60) There is no veil between the supplication of the oppressed and Allah. (Sahih al-Bukhari) Such hypocrisy—hurting the weak while appearing pious—leaves no peace for the oppressors. Their hearts are restless, their power fleeting. Real strength lies not in dominance but in restraint, humility, and justice. This reflection is a reminder that the essence of taqwa is measured not by appearance or words, but by how we treat those who

can offer us nothing. A truly dignified person is not the one with wealth or power, but the one who is harmless to others, respectful to all, and just even when no one is watching. "And never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays them for a Day when eyes will stare in horror." (Surah Ibrahim 14:42) Drawing inspiration from Victor Hugo's Les Misérables, this essay speaks for the silent—those wronged by relatives, ignored by society, and judged by those who claim to be righteous. It is a call to self-reflection: Are we protectors of dignity or perpetrators of silent cruelty?

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Politics should not play spoilsport in hockey

THE recent decision by Indian authorities to deny visas to Pakistan's men and women hockey teams for the upcoming Asia Cup is both unfortunate and deeply disappointing. At a time when sports should serve as a bridge between nations, especially neighbours with shared cultural and historical ties, such moves only deepen existing rifts and discourage the very values of sportsmanship and diplomacy that international competitions are meant to uphold. While it is understandable that relations between India and Pakistan are currently strained, the realm of sports—particularly hockey, which has a rich legacy on both sides—should remain insulated from political tensions. Denying Pakistani players a chance to compete not only hurts the athletes, who train tirelessly for such tournaments, but also deals a blow to fans across the subcontinent. Hockey lovers, regardless of nationality, were eagerly awaiting the chance to witness their teams compete on one of Asia's most prestigious platforms. It is also important to reflect on Pakistan's initial decision to send its teams to India despite the frosty bilateral ties. Many believe that Pakistan should have outright refused to participate in an event hosted by India, anticipating exactly this kind of political roadblock. However, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), in a commendable move, chose to rise above politics in the interest of the sport and the players. That decision reflected maturity and a commitment to regional cooperation through sports. India, on the other hand, missed an opportunity to demonstrate similar sportsmanship. Had New Delhi allowed the Pakistani teams to compete, it would have sent a strong message of magnanimity and leadership. It could have proven that even amidst political differences, India could rise above and honour the spirit of international sport. Sadly, this is not the first time such incidents have occurred. Over the years, political tensions have repeatedly crept into the sporting domain, with cricket, hockey, and even kabaddi falling prey. The casualties of such decisions are always the athletes and the millions of fans who look to sports as a rare space of unity and shared joy. The Asian Hockey Federation and international sports bodies must step in to ensure that political considerations do not override sporting values. Bilateral issues, no matter how serious, should not be allowed to disrupt international fixtures. It is essential to develop frameworks where all qualified teams are guaranteed participation—free from arbitrary political interference. For now, the dream of a high-octane India-Pakistan clash on the hockey field has been dashed. Let us hope that in future, sports can reclaim its rightful place above politics—for the sake of the game, and for the generations who still believe in its power to unite.

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Climate Change: A Growing Threat to Pakistan's Future

For Pakistan, climate action is not a choice—it is a necessity

CLIMATE change is no longer a distant threat—it is a present-day reality, and Pakistan is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world. The impacts are visible, frequent, and devastating. From melting glaciers in the north to prolonged droughts in the south, the country is already bearing the brunt of rising global temperatures. Pakistan contributes less than 1% to global greenhouse gas emissions, yet it consistently ranks among the top 10 countries most affected by climate change. The summer of 2022 brought this reality into sharp focus when unprecedented monsoon rains caused massive floods, submerging one-third of the country, displacing millions, and costing the economy over \$30 billion. Recovery has been slow, and the damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and livelihoods continues to haunt those affected. Glacial melt in the Himalayas, Karakoram, and Hindu Kush ranges poses a dual threat. On one hand, it leads to sudden glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), endangering lives and property downstream. On the other, it threatens long-term water availability for millions who rely on river systems fed by these glaciers. This precarious situation underscores the urgent need for climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. Urban centers like Karachi and Lahore are facing the urban heat island effect, with temperatures reaching dangerous levels. Meanwhile, Balochistan and Tharparkar are experiencing prolonged droughts, contributing to food insecurity and migration. Changes in rainfall patterns are affecting crop yields, directly impacting food supplies and rural incomes. The agriculture sector, which employs a significant portion of Pakistan's workforce, is under increasing pressure. Despite these challenges, climate change has not received the policy priority it deserves. While Pakistan has made efforts such as the Billion Tree Tsunami project and has actively participated in global climate forums, more robust, long-term strategies are needed. Climate resilience must be integrated into all aspects of planning, from infrastructure to agriculture and disaster preparedness. International cooperation is equally crucial. Pakistan needs financial and technical support from developed nations, who bear a greater historical responsibility for carbon emissions. At the same time, the government must ensure transparency, accountability, and efficient use of climate funds. Pakistan's youth, civil society, and private sector also have vital roles to play. Awareness campaigns, green innovation, and sustainable practices must be encouraged at every level. Climate change is not just an environmental issue—it is a national security threat. If left unaddressed, it will exacerbate poverty, trigger mass migrations, and fuel conflict over scarce resources.

The Decay of International Law

Special to Islamabad POST

Adam M. Tugio



In most cases, the West could no longer dictate the rules of global engagement. Yet, this shift has exposed stark inconsistencies in the so-called “rule based order.” Consider the West’s response to two contemporary crises. In Ukraine, the West leaders promptly condemned Russia’s invasion, invoking international law to impose sanctions and rally global support. Contrast this with their muted response to Israel’s genocidal acts against Palestinians and continue supplying weapons to Israel - thus revealing Western complicity

INTERNATIONAL law these days mostly derives from European practices shaped in the 17th Century. The 1648 Westphalia Treaty set the framework for relationships between European monarchs. They were pledged to respect for sovereignty and exercise non-interference in domestic affairs of other countries. These principles become the foundation of today's international relations, reflected in the United Nations Charter. Yet, if we observe closely, it was pretty much a European legal system. Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius - often hailed as the father of international law - even assumed these laws were meant only for “civilized” European monarchs, completely sidelining the rich legal traditions in Asia, the Middle East, and other parts of the world which he contended the latter as less developed or even barbaric – a clear echo of colonial biases. By the 20th century things started shifting, thanks largely to decolonization process following the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. Newly independent states sought to shape the laws governing global interactions, inspired by Ten Principles of 1955 Bandung Declaration of Asia-Africa Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement’s objectives. UN General Assembly suddenly become fora for reinterpretation of legal structure that reinforces old power structures. Take example of the law of the sea. Newly independent coastal states pushed for having expanded maritime zones, securing jurisdiction over exclusive economic zones (EEZs) stretching 200 nautical miles from their shores. Archipelagic countries argued to close the pocket of vast high seas within their waters and subjected them to sovereignty of countries with this specific geographical unique situation. These new legal regimes were finally codified in the 1982 UNCLOS. In climate negotiations, the Global South also pushed for “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” underscoring that the Western countries bear more responsibility in mitigation of global climate change due to their historical emission. In most cases, the West could no longer dictate the rules of global engagement. Yet, this shift has exposed stark inconsistencies in the so-called “rule based order.” Consider the West’s re-

sponse to two contemporary crises. In Ukraine, the West leaders promptly condemned Russia’s invasion, invoking international law to impose sanctions and rally global support. Contrast this with their muted response to Israel’s genocidal acts against Palestinians and continue supplying weapons to Israel - thus revealing Western complicity. As Yanis Varoufakis, former Greece’s Finance Minister, cynically notes, the phrase of “land without a people for the people without a land” sounds like preserving old practices of white settlers to grab indigenous lands with forces because the former considered it as “terra nullius” or a land without people. This double standard fuels a growing perception that the so called “rules-based order” apply only when they serve Western interests. Today, the idea of a rule-based order feels increasingly like a legal relic of the past. As a response, the West has started to get creative with legal strategies to keep its influence and upper hand position alive. Take, for instance, EU regulatory frameworks for the importation of commodities. The regulations introduce various technical requirements such as traceability, geolocation of productions and verification of legal compliance with pretext of preserving environmental. Albeit sounds positive in its objective, these technical standards eventually create non-tariff barriers for import of commodities from developing countries with the ultimate goal of protecting local producers in European. Language, too, has become a sort of tool for reinvention. By reworking familiar terms and introducing fresh legal concepts, the West is trying to redraw the “rules of the game.” In many cases, values like free speech, human rights, and democracy only take on true meaning when they fit with Western interests. Often, this kind of semantic acrobatics acts as a cover for waning influence. These legal maneuvers, in effect, compensate for a declining capacity to enforce direct control and creating what it is called by Martti Koskeniemi, Finnish lawyer and diplomat, as concealed imperialism. Traditional international law isn’t entirely collapsing, but it is definitely transforming; the old, state-centric order and that narrow post Second World War arrangement just don’t fit with today’s multipolar

reality. The question now is how the world can steer this change into a legal system that genuinely reflects its diverse global membership. Let me offer my take on this. First, real inclusivity goes beyond hollow promises. It necessitates a genuine commitment to multilateralism. The UN, despite its limitations, remains the most important forum for such dialogue. The structure of the UN Security Council, however, has to be reformed so that the Global South is well represented. Middle powers like Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkey, and Australia might inject much-needed regional perspectives into global deliberations to ensure the credibility of international legal system. They can also work together with countries in their respective region through regional organizations to amplify their views for promoting fairness in international law. Second, the world needs teamwork and cooperative solution to address issues of shared concern – from climate change to pandemics, and from transnational organised crimes to cyber threats. The Paris Agreement, for instance, might be flawed, but it shows what’s possible when nations negotiate as equals. Perhaps extending the approach of the Agreement which recognised different degree of responsibility amongst states into trade, security, and human rights, could pave the way for a more inclusive international order. Third, rebuilding trust in a system that many say is unfair might be our best bet for meaningful change. A renewed emphasis for peaceful resolution of disputes is crucial for fostering greater trust and understanding between states. For this reason, dialogue and diplomacy are critically important. Legal moves should stand for true fairness rather than just protecting old, or self-serving interests since global community has been witnessing how law is twisted into a political tool. In conclusion, the evolution of international law, from the courts of European monarchs to the halls of the UN, has always been a story of adaptation. Today, as old privileges erode and new voices rise, the challenge is to craft a system that’s truly international, not just a shadow of Western dominance. The decay of the old order isn’t an end, but it’s an opportunity—if only the world can seize it.

Latin America Thoughts and Global Politics

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The document also explores the methodological implications of adopting Latin American perspectives in IR. It critiques the positivist bias in mainstream IR and promotes more interpretive, reflexive, and critical methodologies. These methods emphasize context, meaning, and the agency of local actors, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of international phenomena

THE international relations in Latin America has historically been influenced by both global and regional theoretical currents. Historically, Latin America’s IR community developed in the shadow of dominant U.S. and European theories, often serving as consumers rather than producers of knowledge. However, this imbalance has gradually shifted as Latin American scholars have begun to assert their own theoretical contributions grounded in their unique historical, cultural, and geopolitical contexts. These contributions are not simply derivative of Western theories but offer original insights based on the continent’s colonial past, developmental challenges, and socio-political dynamics. A major theme in the document is the critique of the Eurocentric nature of mainstream IR theory. Latin American scholars argue that traditional IR, with its emphasis on state-centric realism and liberalism, often fails to capture the complexities of Latin American experiences. For instance, issues such as dependency, imperialism, and the role of non-state actors are inadequately addressed by conventional theories. Consequently, scholars from the region advocate for theories that are more attuned to their realities, such as Dependency Theory, which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to modernization theory. Dependency theorists, like Raúl Prebisch and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, argued that the structural imbalances of the global economy perpetuate underdevelopment in peripheral countries, including those in Latin America. Furthermore, Latin American IR scholars emphasize the importance of historical structuralism, which builds on Marxist and post-Marxist traditions to analyze the international system. This approach highlights how historical and material conditions shape international relations, particularly in post-colonial societies. The text points out that such frameworks allow for a better understanding of how colonial legacies, economic exploitation, and social hierarchies continue to influence contemporary global interactions. These perspectives challenge the notion of a universal IR theory and instead promote the idea of “pluriversal” knowledge,

where multiple epistemologies coexist and inform global understanding. Another significant contribution from Latin America is the development of postcolonial and decolonial approaches to IR. These approaches question the foundational assumptions of Western IR theories and call for the decolonization of knowledge. Scholars such as Walter Dignolo and Anibal Quijano have argued that the global order is deeply rooted in coloniality a structure of power that continues to privilege Western ways of knowing and being. Decolonial IR therefore seeks to dismantle these hierarchies and elevate subaltern voices and perspectives. This epistemic shift is not merely academic but also political, as it seeks to transform the way international relations are studied and practiced. The document also explores the methodological implications of adopting Latin American perspectives in IR. It critiques the positivist bias in mainstream IR and promotes more interpretive, reflexive, and critical methodologies. These methods emphasize context, meaning, and the agency of local actors, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of international phenomena. Ethnography, discourse analysis, and historical sociology are some of the tools recommended by Latin American scholars to better capture the complexity of international relations in the region. Institutional development is another area addressed in the text. While the academic infrastructure for IR in Latin America has historically been underdeveloped, there has been a recent surge in scholarly output and institutional support. Regional organizations, academic networks, and journals have played a crucial role in fostering indigenous IR research. Nevertheless, challenges persist, including limited funding, language barriers, and the continued dominance of English-language scholarship. Despite these obstacles, Latin American scholars have made significant strides in building a vibrant and autonomous IR community. The document also examines the impact of regional integration processes on IR theory in Latin America. Initiatives such as MERCOSUR, UNASUR, and CELAC provide fertile ground for theoretical innovation by of-

fering alternative models of regionalism that contrast with European integration. These models emphasize sovereignty, solidarity, and social inclusion, reflecting the region’s historical experiences and normative preferences. By studying these processes, Latin American scholars contribute to the global debate on regionalism and challenge the applicability of European models to other contexts. A recurring argument in the document is the need for dialogue and engagement between Latin American and other non-Western IR traditions. The rise of Global IR as a movement aligns with this vision by promoting a more inclusive discipline that values diverse perspectives. Latin American scholars have been active participants in this movement, advocating for theoretical and methodological pluralism. This approach does not reject existing IR theories outright but seeks to complement and enrich them with alternative viewpoints. Such a stance fosters intellectual humility and openness, essential qualities for a truly global discipline. The document further highlights the pedagogical implications of incorporating Latin American perspectives into IR curricula. It argues that students should be exposed to a broader range of theories and case studies that reflect the diversity of global experiences. This pedagogical shift can help deconstruct the implicit hierarchies in knowledge production and empower students from the Global South to see themselves as active contributors to the field. Decolonizing the curriculum is thus both an academic and political act, aimed at creating a more equitable and representative IR discipline. Lastly, the document concludes with a call to action for scholars, institutions, and policymakers. It urges greater investment in research and education in the Global South, stronger networks of collaboration among scholars from different regions, and the creation of platforms for disseminating non-Western scholarship. It also calls for a reevaluation of the metrics used to assess academic excellence, advocating for criteria that recognize the value of local knowledge and impact. By taking these steps, the discipline of IR can move towards a more just and inclusive future.

Briefs

Paramilitaries
launch first
attack on
Port Sudan

PORT SUDAN: Sudanese paramilitaries on Sunday struck Port Sudan, the army said, in the first attack on the seat of the army-aligned government in the country's two-year war. The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), at war with the regular army since April 2023, have increased their use of drones since losing territory, including much of the capital Khartoum, in March. Army spokesman Nabil Abdullah said in a statement that the RSF "targeted Osman Digna Air Base, a goods warehouse and some civilian facilities in the city of Port Sudan with suicide drones". He reported no casualties but "limited damage" in the city, on Sudan's Red Sea coast. AFP images showed smoke billowing from the area of the airport in Port Sudan, about 650 kilometres (400 miles) from the nearest known RSF positions on the outskirts of Khartoum. In the eastern border town of Kassala, some 500 kilometres south of Port Sudan, near Eritrea, witnesses said three drones struck the airport on Sunday for the second day in a row. An AFP correspondent in Port Sudan said his home, about 20 kilometres from the airport, was shaking as explosions were heard early Sunday. A passenger told AFP from the airport that "we were on the way to the plane when we were quickly evacuated and taken out of the terminal". — **Agencies**

Indian act
to block
X account
of Bilawal
Islammed

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Spokesperson for Bilawal House Surenar Valasai on Sunday strongly condemned India's move to block the X (formerly Twitter) account of Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. He described the action as a retaliatory response to the Chairman's unequivocal and bold stance on the Pahalgam incident, which he had presented before the international community. The spokesperson said that India's move to block Chairman PPP's X account proves that Indian Prime Minister Modi is afraid of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. It also proves that India is, in fact, an undemocratic country and its Prime Minister is an extremely cowardly person. He said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's narrative on the Pahalgam incident unsettled Modi. He further said, 'India's suspension of the PPP Chairman's X account is akin to an ostrich burying its head in the sand.' Pointing out past events, he said it was Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who first exposed the "Butcher of Gujarat" before the world, and he will continue to hold up a mirror to Modi's war-mongering mindset.

Naqvi meets
Interior
Minister
of Oman

DNA

MUSCAT: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Ministry of Interior of Oman in Muscat today, where he was warmly welcomed by his Omani counterpart, Sayyid Hamood bin Faisal Al Busaidi. The two leaders held a meeting and discussed the current regional situation. During the meeting, Interior Minister Naqvi apprised his Omani counterpart on Pakistan's principled stance regarding the recent tensions between Pakistan and India. He emphasized that the blame game is escalating tensions and made it clear that Pakistan's position is very clear: if war is imposed, we will respond with full force. He added that Pakistan is a peaceful country and desires sustainable peace in the region. He also appreciated Oman's key role in resolving international conflicts. Moreover, issues being faced by Pakistani nationals in obtaining visas, cooperation in anti-narcotics and anti-smuggling efforts, police training, and collaboration related to coastal guards were also discussed during the meeting.

Belgian business delegation explores
strategic collaboration with the ICCI

During the meeting, both sides shared insights into their respective markets and discussed potential collaborations in infrastructure development, technology services, construction, value addition, and more. Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui appreciated the visit and emphasized the growing investment opportunities in Pakistan, particularly in sectors aligned with the expertise of the visiting firms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A high-level Belgian business delegation representing thirteen innovative companies visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and held a constructive meeting with Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui. The delegation led by Brat Van Loon included prominent entrepreneurs and business leaders from sectors including construction, IT, law, logistics, interior design, and engineering. Notable representatives included Joël Eyckens (EGD), Koen Goossens (Goossens Metaal), Erwin Jacobs (Schreurs Project), Stijn Derison (Tricore), Sabrina Fiorelli (PAQT), Peter Marres (Marres), Yvan Vangeren (Jansen Doe Het Zelf), Youri Aerts (Fruit at Work), Wilfried Nackom (Plastron), Roel Bonner (Atelier Biesmans), Renilde Colla (Studiebureau Heedfeld) and Kristine Poels (La Squadra). During the meeting, both sides shared insights into their respective markets and discussed potential collaborations in infrastructure development, technology services, construction, value addition, and more. Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui appreciated the visit and emphasized the growing investment opportunities in Pakistan, particularly in sectors aligned with the expertise of the visiting firms. The ICCI SVP also highlighted the Chamber's commitment to fostering international

partnerships that support innovation, knowledge exchange, and economic growth. The Belgian delegates expressed keen interest in establishing long-term partnerships and exploring joint ven-

tures with Pakistani counterparts. This interaction marks a significant step towards strengthening Belgium-Pakistan business relations, encouraging mutual investment, and opening doors for collab-

oration across diverse industries. Executive member Imran Siddiqui Shahid Zafar also attended the meeting., ICCI members Ch. Mohammad Ali and Shahid Zafar also attended the meeting.

Civil society role vital
for combating terrorism

ISLAMABAD: In the modern warfare and presence of sophisticated weaponry and communication modes, terrorism has emerged as the most lethal threat to integrity of countries and safety of their people. It is not a threat to countries and regions but globally and demands a multi-dimensional role of political governments, security institutions and civil society to eliminate this scourge in all its forms and manifestations. Therefore, the dream of achieving durable peace cannot be materialized unless and until all the relevant stakeholders make collective efforts in defeating terrorism that is threatening our social fabric. "Terrorism is a known unlawful act of using force or violence to intimidate or coerce a government or people and damage national fabric for furthering the agenda of destabilization," said Prof. Dr. Jamil Khan, Director Centre of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Peshawar. "A gradual process of countering radicalization, negativity and pessimist thinking

"it requires a comprehensive response of civil society, academics, religious scholars, media and other stakeholders." He said, traditionally the states are thought to be on the forefront to curb terrorism but in modern age it is increasingly recognized that not the governments alone but other segments also have a key role to play in eliminating terrorism. "Besides actions of security forces, the role of civil society can also be a way forward to address the causes of terrorism like radicalism, illiteracy and socioeconomic imbalances," he said. "As civil society components largely operate independently and flexibly, they can better engage communities for forging unity against inimical forces." He said constructive role of civil society can also play role in upbringing a generation that dislikes terrorism and when reaching adolescent, this generation will have a clear vision about terrorism and avoid falling into hands of terrorists. "A gradual process of countering radicalization, negativity and pessimist thinking

through community engagements and promoting counter-narratives, can definitely have positive results," Dr. Jamil said. He said social media had badly affected 'hujra culture' in KP. "Today our youth is more influenced by social media than the saner voices of their elders as they spend lesser time with them. "If properly integrated, our civil society, ulema, teachers and parents can collectively encourage community resilience against extremist ideologies by building trust between state and citizens," he said. Highlighting importance of community engagement, Ashfaq Khan, Deputy Commissioner Kurram said that after peace jirga on January 1, 2025, over 979 bunkers were demolished and weapons surrendered with the cooperation of both parties. The surrendered weapons include RPG-7s, 12.7 mm machine guns, 10-inch missile launchers, 82 mm mortars and other heavy weapons and ammunition and explosives. "Tribal leaders, maliks, chieftains and religious leaders of all sects in Kurram have guaranteed peace in their respective

areas at January 1, 2025 peace jirga and reiterated strict action against violators," he said. Additionally, he said, recruitment of youth in Road Protection Force for Kurram has started and so far 200 individuals have been recruited to protect Parachinar-Peshawar, Thall-Sadda and other link roads. Ikhtair Wali, Prime Minister's coordinator for Information and KP Affairs said that sensitization of masses against terrorism had started prevailing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after deadly terrorist attack on APS Peshawar in December 2016. He said the then PMLN Govt led by Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had united the entire nation against terrorism and formulated an inclusive National Action Plan that helped in fighting terrorism. Under the project of countering and prevention of terrorism in Pakistan, he said, a series of orientation workshops and seminars were held to integrate community-based organizations, academia and public sector bodies in efforts to counter terrorism. — **APP**

Barca battle back at
Valladolid to preserve
Liga title charge

VALLADOLID: Barcelona survived a scare as they came from behind to beat already-relegated Real Valladolid 2-1 on Saturday to extend their La Liga lead and move one step closer to the title. The Catalan giants heavily rotated with Tuesday's Champions League semi-final clash at Inter Milan in mind and fell behind to Ivan Sanchez's early deflected goal. However second half strikes by Raphinha and Fermin Lopez helped Barca climb seven points clear of second-place champions Real Madrid, who host Celta Vigo on Sunday ahead of the Clasico on May 11. Barca coach Hansi Flick kept just two players who started the blockbuster 3-3 first leg draw with Inter on Wednesday in his side - Pedri Gonzalez and Gerard Martin. Flick brought in his German compatriot Marc-Andre ter Stegen in goal, after a long injury lay-off, for his first appearance since September. "I was really looking forward to playing this game and it's always better with a win for the team," Ter Stegen told DAZN. — **Agencies**

Two more bodies of
Libya boat tragedy arrive

LAHORE: Another two bodies of Pakistan nationals who lost their lives in a tragic boat accident off the eastern coast of Libya, arrived at Lahore Airport on Sunday. The incident occurred during the night between April 12 and 13, when a migrant boat capsized near Libya's eastern shoreline. The victims were identified as Sufyan and Nadeem Ahmed, residents of Gujranwala. State Minister for Public Affairs Rana Mubashir Hussain and Member Punjab Assembly Mian Imran Javed received the bodies at the Lahore Airport cargo department. Later, bodies were handed over to the grieving families. Prayers were also offered for the departed souls. Speaking on the occasion, Rana Mubashir Hussain expressed deep sorrow and grief, and expressed solidarity with the bereaved families. He said: "We are making strict laws against those who play with the lives of people. Some culprits had been arrested while the rest have yet to be caught, he added. — **APP**

Ministers'
salaries up
by 188%;
Zardari...

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significantly increase lawmakers' salaries, raising them from Rs76,000 to Rs400,000. Apart from the tweaks to the parliamentarians' remuneration, the assembly also hiked the provincial ministers' salaries from Rs100,000 to Rs960,000. The speaker's salary was increased from Rs125,000 to Rs950,000, whereas that of the deputy speaker was hiked to Rs800,000 from the previous Rs120,000. Furthermore, parliamentary secretaries are to be paid Rs451,000 as opposed to the previous amount of Rs83,000; adviser to the chief minister from Rs100,000 to Rs665,000; special assistant to the chief minister from Rs100,000 to Rs665,000.

ADB
support
for food
security...

FROM PAGE 01

ADB's 58th Annual Meeting in Milan. "This expanded support will help countries alleviate hunger, improve diets, and protect the natural environment, while providing opportunities for farmers and agribusinesses. It will drive change across the entire food value chain, from how food is grown and processed to how it is distributed and consumed," Kanda added. The new ambition builds on ADB's September 2022 pledge to invest \$14 billion by 2025 to improve food security and ease the regional food crisis. By the end of 2024, ADB had committed \$11 billion—about 80% of the original allocation—with an additional \$3.3 billion in investments programmed for 2025. The \$26 billion in additional funding announced today will consist of \$18.5 billion in direct ADB support for governments and \$7.5 billion in private sector investments. By 2030, ADB aims for private sector investments to account for more than 27% of the total \$40 billion program—underscoring the critical role of the private sector in driving food systems transformation. More than half of the world's undernourished people live in developing Asia. Biodiversity loss and malnutrition are straining food systems, which account for 70% of global water use, 50% of habitable land, and 80% of biodiversity loss. Food systems also employ 40% of the region's workforce. To support food systems transformation, the program will modernize agricultural value chains to improve access to affordable and healthy food for vulnerable populations. It will also invest in improving soil quality and conserving biodiversity-essential elements for productive agriculture that are increasingly under threat from climate change, pollution, and the loss of land and aquatic ecosystems. The program will support the development of digital technology and analytics to improve decision-making for farmers, agribusinesses, and policymakers.

Canelo Alvarez unifies
super middleweight titles
on Saudi Arabia debut

RIYADH: Mexican boxing superstar Saul "Canelo" Alvarez unified the super middleweight world titles after a unanimous points win over IBF champion William Scull in Riyadh early on Sunday. Alvarez, 34, improved to 63-2-2 with 39 knockouts after doing enough on his Saudi debut which continued his tradition of fighting during the Mexican festival weekend of Cinco de Mayo. The Cuban super middleweight entered the unification title fight with a 23-0 record as a heavy underdog. Scull largely stayed on the outside for most of the fight, relying on his advantage in height and reach along with footwork and speed to try keep Alvarez at bay. But Canelo was able to land walloping body shots throughout the fight, as he stalked Scull, cutting off the ring and cornering his opponent with flurries of hooks. "He moved even more than I thought. But, it's OK, we win," said Canelo in the post-fight interview. Canelo was coming off a lopsided unanimous decision over Edgar Berlanga in Las Vegas last year. Alvarez was stripped of his International Boxing Federation belt when he agreed to fight Berlanga over Scull, the IBF's mandatory challenger. This weekend's contest marked the first time Canelo has fought outside of North America during his nearly 20-year professional career. The boxers entered the ring early Sunday morning to coincide with prime time Saturday night TV in North America. The bout had been billed as a tune-up for a widely anticipated showdown between Alvarez and Terence Crawford later this year. Following the win, Crawford entered the ring, where a fight date was agreed for the two to meet in Las Vegas on September 12. On the undercard, Jaime Munguia avenged his knockout loss to super middleweight Bruno Surace last year, after keeping the Frenchman against the ropes for much of the rematch and landing rapid combinations, earning him a unanimous decision. — **Agencies**

National
hero Arshad
Nadeem
visits IPSD

ISLAMABAD: National hero and javelin throw champion Arshad Nadeem, who brought pride to Pakistan in the Olympics, visited the IPSD where he was warmly welcomed by SSP Security Division Muhammad Sarfraz Virk. A Public Relations Officer told APP on Sunday that on this occasion, SSP Virk briefed the national hero on various ongoing initiatives of Islamabad Police aimed at public convenience and promoting citizen-friendly policing. These initiatives include the Police Response Unit, special desks for women and children, the Safe City Project, and community policing efforts. SSP Virk stated that Arshad Nadeem is not only a source of pride for Pakistan but also a role model for the younger generation. He praised Arshad Nadeem's hard work, dedication, and patriotism, stating that recognizing such sports heroes is a priority for Islamabad Police as it promotes a positive message in society. — **DNA**

PSL honours Taekwondo
champion Syed Abu Huraira Shah
under 'Hamaray Heroes' initiative

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Super League (PSL) has honoured 19-year-old international Taekwondo athlete Syed Abu Huraira Shah with the prestigious 'Hamaray Heroes' award in recognition of his achievements in martial arts and his efforts in representing Pakistan on international platforms. Huraira began practicing Taekwondo at the age of 12 and has since represented Pakistan in numerous international championships held across Asia and Europe. He has competed in tournaments in Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and France, earning accolades and medals for the country. His notable achievements include a Gold Medal at the Malaysia Open Taekwondo Championship (2024), a Bronze Medal at the International Taekwondo Championship in France earlier this year, and additional bronze medals in Japan (2018) and Thailand (2019). He also participated in the Fujairah Open (UAE) in 2020 and placed fifth at the Qatar Open in 2023. Speaking to media after receiving the PSL award, Huraira expressed his deep grat-

itude to Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab for their continued support. "The Government of Sindh helped me secure sponsorships, and I dedicate this award to them. The Chief Minister has always supported athletes. His work in promoting sports in the province is commendable," he stated. In recognition of his achievements abroad, he was also honoured by the Mayor of Piossy, France, and recently received an appreciation award from Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori. Huraira praised the PSL's 'Hamaray Heroes' campaign as a valuable platform to celebrate unsung national heroes, adding that it reflects the growing impact of Pakistani athletes in disciplines beyond mainstream sports. He expressed hope that his journey would inspire more young Pakistanis to pursue martial arts. "It's a sport that requires discipline, dedication and heart. I want to show the world what Pakistani athletes are capable of," he added. — **DNA**

PSL 10 points table after Quetta beat Islamabad
Gladiators replace United at the top of the standings

DNA

LAHORE: 2019 champions Quetta Gladiators registered a narrow two-wicket victory over defending champions Islamabad United in the 23rd match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 10 here at the Gaddafi Stadium on Saturday. Put into bat first, the United registered a commendable total of 157/9 on the board, courtesy of Mohammad Nawaz's blistering knock. The all-rounder topscored for United with a valiant 49 off 34 deliveries with the help of one four and five sixes. Besides him, openers Sahibzada Farhan (39) and Kyle Maters (22)

Teams	Matches	Wins	Losses	No Result	Points	Net Run Rate
Quetta Gladiators	8	5	2	1	11	0.906
Islamabad United	8	5	3	0	10	0.650
Lahore Qalandars	8	4	3	1	9	1.110
Karachi Kings	7	4	3	0	8	0.445
Peshawar Zalmi	7	3	4	0	6	-0.507
Multan Sultans	8	1	7	0	2	-2.597

made notable contributions. Faheem Ashraf was the standout bowler for the Gladiators, taking four wickets for just 25 runs in his three overs. He was supported by Khurram, Abrar, Saud and Jamieson, who made one scalp apiece. Chasing a 158-run target, the Gladiators knocked the winning runs on the penultimate delivery of the innings when Hasan

Nawaz smashed Muhammad Shahzad for a six over deep backward square. The right-handed batter smashed two fours and four sixes on his way to an unbeaten 64 off 41 deliveries. He was supported by Rilee Rossouw (27) and Mohammad Wasim Jr (16), who played a pivotal role in leading the Gladiators to victory.

The two-wicket victory lifted the Gladiators to replace Islamabad United at the top of the PSL 10 standings as they now have 11 points after eight matches, while the defending champions slipped to second after their third consecutive defeat. Two-time champions Lahore Qalandars remained third with nine points in eight matches and are closely followed by arch-rivals Karachi Kings, who are fourth with eight points in a game less. Babar Azam's Peshawar Zalmi hold fifth position with six points after seven matches, while Multan Sultans, the only team to be knocked out of the playoffs race, remained at the bottom with just two points in eight games.

Briefs

Saudi fintech startup Nqoodlet secures \$3m in seed funding

RIYADH: Saudi fintech firm Nqoodlet has announced the successful closure of a \$3 million seed funding round aimed at accelerating its mission to streamline financial operations for small and medium-sized enterprises. The round was led by Waad Investments, with participation from Omantel, Sanabil 500 Investment, OQAL, Seed Holding, and a group of strategic investors. Founded by Mohamed Milyani and Yara Ghouth, Nqoodlet offers an integrated digital platform that includes smart corporate cards, real-time expense tracking, and financial automation tools. The startup is focused on transforming financial management for SMEs across Saudi Arabia and the wider Gulf Cooperation Council region. According to the company, more than 600 SMEs have already adopted the platform, resulting in reported gains such as an 80 percent improvement in process efficiency and average annual cost savings of SR200,000 (\$53,330) per business. “This funding gives us the rocket fuel to scale faster, go deeper with banks, and bring financial clarity to thousands of businesses who deserve better,” said Milyani. —APP

Traditional art troupes embrace scenic spots, energize cultural-tourism fusion

LANZHOU: During the May Day holiday, a scenic area in northwest China drew visitors seeking to explore its ancient way of life, dating back more than 1,000 years. Li Longfei, a 38-year-old local opera performer dressed in official Song Dynasty (960-1127) attire, was playing the role of a county magistrate hearing cases outdoors, with this scene surrounded by an engaged audience that laughed and nodded along with the performance. Notably, this immersive experience took place in a restored ancient architectural complex at Huanzhou Ancient City in Huanxian County of Gansu Province, which combines dining, historical costume rentals and cultural performances. Initially hesitant about street performances, Li has since grown to appreciate them. “Performing here creates a more authentic Song Dynasty atmosphere and introduces our opera to tourists nationwide,” Li said while standing near ancient brickwork. “During holidays, I give multiple daily performances. It’s tiring but incredibly rewarding.” In contrast to the hectic pace of today, traditional opera artists like Li once went through a lean time, when this troupe staged fewer than 50 performances a year, barely covering salaries, partly due to competition from other arts and online entertainment.—APP

3rd int’l Glaciers’ Preservation moot to be held in Dushanbe

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir, on Sunday, informed that the third High-Level International Conference dedicated to Glaciers’ Preservation to be held on 29-31 May 2025 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The Conference will be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Conference will provide a unique platform and excellent opportunity for the world community to raise awareness of and to promote and facilitate actions and sustainable measures towards preserving glaciers, as well as its integrated management at all levels through transformative glaciers-related actions and commitments, Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir told APP here.—APP

HR violations and corruption in Turkmenistan: a grim reality

The government controls all branches of state, including the judiciary, media, and security services. Independent political activity is strictly forbidden, and all opposition parties are banned

LONDON: Turkmenistan, a resource-rich Central Asian nation with one of the largest natural gas reserves in the world, continues to be one of the most repressive and opaque countries globally. Behind a carefully crafted image of national unity and prosperity lies a troubling reality of widespread human rights violations and endemic corruption. Since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Turkmenistan has been ruled by an authoritarian regime that tolerates no dissent. The late President Saparmurat Niyazov, and his successor Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov—followed by his son Serdar—have maintained a tight grip on power. The government controls all

branches of state, including the judiciary, media, and security services. Independent political activity is strictly forbidden, and all opposition parties are banned. Freedom of expression is virtually nonexistent. State media is used solely to promote the leadership, and independent journalism is not allowed. Access to foreign media and the internet is heavily restricted, with many websites blocked and surveillance widespread. Citizens who dare to speak out against the regime risk arrest, torture, forced disappearances, or worse.

Human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have consistently reported grave abuses in

Turkmenistan. Political prisoners remain behind bars under harsh conditions, often without access to legal representation or fair trials. Religious freedom is tightly restricted, with unregistered groups frequently harassed or banned outright. Enforced disappearances are a particular concern. Many political opponents and critics of the regime have simply vanished into the prison system, with families left in the dark about their loved ones’ fate. Torture and inhumane treatment in detention facilities are common, and prison conditions are often described as cruel and degrading. Turkmenistan’s vast natural gas wealth has done little to improve

the lives of its citizens. Instead, it has enriched a small elite while most of the population lives in poverty. Transparency International ranks Turkmenistan among the most corrupt countries in the world. The government’s finances are shrouded in secrecy, and there is little to no accountability for public spending. Public officials and family members of the ruling elite are reportedly involved in large-scale embezzlement and money laundering. International companies operating in Turkmenistan are often required to pay bribes or partner with politically connected firms, reinforcing systemic corruption. The international community has

largely turned a blind eye to Turkmenistan’s abuses, primarily due to energy interests and regional stability concerns. However, sustained pressure is crucial. Human rights must be a central part of all diplomatic and economic engagements with Ashgabat. Sanctions targeting individuals involved in human rights violations and corruption, along with support for civil society and independent media in exile, can help pave the way for greater transparency and reform. The people of Turkmenistan deserve more than silence from the world. Their suffering should not be ignored behind the veil of gas pipelines and grandiose state propaganda.—Agencies

Turkish Naval Ship TCG BÜYÜKADA visits Karachi

DNA

KARACHI: Turkish Naval Ship TCG BÜYÜKADA arrived at Karachi Port on a goodwill visit. Upon arrival, the ship was warmly welcomed by officials from both the Turkish and Pakistan Navies, said a press release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Pak Navy) on Sunday. During its stay in Karachi, the crew of TCG BÜYÜKADA will engage in a series of professional interactions with Pakistan Navy personnel. The visit aims to enhance mutual understanding and strengthen maritime cooperation between the two navies, it further said. The goodwill visit of TCG BÜYÜKADA stands as a testament to the



ever-strengthening maritime collaboration between Pakistan and Türkiye. It reflects

the deep-rooted mutual trust and strategic partnership between the two brotherly

nations, anchored in centuries-old historical and cultural ties, the press release said.

MENA’s exposure to US tariffs mostly indirect, says Moody’s

RIYADH: The Middle East and North Africa’s exposure to the latest US tariffs will be largely indirect, driven by weaker global growth prospects and softening energy prices rather than direct trade effects, a new analysis showed. In its latest report, Moody’s Investors Service noted that the Trump administration’s exclusion of oil and gas from the tariff scheme limits the immediate impact on MENA economies. This comes as US President Donald Trump imposed a 10 percent universal support tariff and duties of up to 145 percent on Chinese goods – prompting Beijing to retaliate with tariffs of up to 125 percent – while granting a 90-day pause on steeper tariffs for dozens of other countries. Moody’s views align with an April report by global consulting firm PwC, which stated that Middle Eastern economies will not face a direct impact from the tariffs, but will be affected through indirect channels. “Exemption of oil and gas from the new US tariff scheme limits the size of the region’s affected exports to a relatively small share of GDP (gross domestic product), except for Jordan,” Moody’s said. The report added that second-order consequences, such as declining demand, lower investor risk appetite, and cheaper oil, are more likely to weigh on credit conditions. “The second-round impact, due to weaker global demand, will be tempered by a relatively limited reliance of the MENA region’s growth on non-energy exports,” it added. The analysis further noted that the oil market has already priced in expectation of weaker global growth. Brent crude declined to around \$65 per barrel in April – about 20 percent below the average price recorded in 2024. —DNA

UAE president, Qatar emir review regional uplift

LONDON: The president of the UAE and the emir of Qatar discussed bilateral ties during a meeting at Qasr Al-Shati in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani discussed regional and international issues of mutual interest, focusing particularly on the latest developments in the Middle East and sharing insights on efforts to address them. The leaders explored ways to boost cooperation for the benefit and prosperity of both nations, the Emirates News Agency reported. Several senior officials and ministers attended the meeting, including Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, deputy ruler of Abu Dhabi and national security adviser, and Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani.—APP

Israeli strikes kill 16, including 3 kids

GAZA: Gaza’s civil defense agency on Sunday said Israeli strikes on the Palestinian territory killed 16 people, including at least three children. Six people were killed in overnight air strikes in Khan Yunis governorate, in the south of the Gaza Strip, civil defense spokesman Mahmud Basal said. They included two boys aged five and two, in an apartment in Al-Mawasi. The civil defense later said 10 more people were killed in a strike on a tent also in Al-Mawasi, among them a child and seven women. The Israeli military did not immediately respond for comment when contact by AFP. A spokesperson said they were gathering details. A military statement issued in the morning said the army had “struck more than 100 terrorist targets throughout the Gaza Strip” during the past two days. It said soldiers found “weapons caches” and killed “a number of terrorists” in the south. Israel resumed its military offensive in Gaza on March 18 after a two-month truce in its war against Hamas, which was triggered by the Palestinian militant group’s October 7, 2023 attack. The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza on Sunday said at least 2,436 people have been killed since Israel resumed its campaign in Gaza, bringing the war’s overall death toll to 52,535.—APP

Two dead, 31 injured in Croatia bus crash

ZAGREB: Two people died and 31 people were injured when a Bosnian-registered coach and a car crashed into each other in Croatia on Sunday, police and medical staff said. The accident occurred at 3:00 am (0100 GMT) on a busy freeway some 50 kilometers (30 miles) east of the capital, Zagreb. The casualties were taken to nearby hospitals, police spokeswoman Maja Filipovic told AFP, adding that an investigation had been launched to determine the causes. The health ministry, cited by state news agency Hina, said several badly hurt people had undergone operations in hospital. Photos published by local media showed a double-decker bus lying on its side in the middle of the freeway with its windows broken.—APP

Green enclave I housing project stalled due to soaring inflation

ISLAMABAD: The Green Enclave I, Barakahu project, a collaborative venture between the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) and M/S Green Tree, aimed at providing affordable housing for federal government employees, has reportedly come to a standstill. In an exclusive talk with media, the official spokesperson of FGEHA shared that the contractor attributed the project’s stall to rising inflation and escalating construction costs.—APP

Prabowo opens Hajj, Umrah airport terminal in Jakarta

JAKARTA: Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto inaugurated on Sunday a special terminal for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims at Jakarta’s international airport, where travel will also be facilitated under Saudi Arabia’s Makkah Route initiative. Indonesia, which has the world’s largest Muslim-majority population, sends the highest number of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims every year. As pilgrims around the world have already begun to make their way to Saudi Arabia for Hajj this year, about 221,000 people will be coming from Indonesia. “The government wants to give the best service for our pilgrims. We also understand that many of our pilgrims are seniors, and so we must take very good care of them,” Subianto said during the inauguration ceremony at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. “We understand that our pilgrims have saved up for a long time, and even waited for a long time, and so the government under my leadership will do our very best to give the best services and work hard to lower the cost of Hajj.” The airport’s 2F terminal area, which has undergone renovations, has been transformed into a dedicated area for Indonesia’s Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. It was developed to serve 6.1 million travelers annually, according to a statement issued by the Cabinet Secretariat. The launch event was attended by Saudi Ambassador to Indonesia Faisal Abdullah Amodi, as well as other Indonesian ministers, including Religious Affairs Minister Nasaruddin Umar and State-Owned Enterprises Minister Erick Thohir. Special counters for Saudi immigration, which are part of the Kingdom’s Makkah Route initiative, have also been set up at the new terminal. The program launched in Muslim-majority countries in 2019 allows Hajj pilgrims to fulfill all visa, customs and health requirements in one place, at the airport of origin, and save long hours of waiting before and upon reaching the Kingdom. In Indonesia, pilgrims departing from the cities of Jakarta, Surabaya and Solo are benefiting from the Makkah Route initiative. “As President Prabowo said, this is proof of the government’s commitment to give the best service, especially for our senior pilgrims. He is also proud of the modern and comfortable facilities that have been set up,” Umar, the religious affairs minister, said on social media. Thousands of Indonesian pilgrims have begun to depart for Saudi Arabia, after the first Hajj flights commenced last Friday. Though the pilgrimage itself can be performed over five or six days, many pilgrims arrive early to make the most of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to fulfill their religious duty. In 2025, the Hajj is expected to take place on June 4 and end on June 9.—APP

Beekeeping new economic path for women empowerment

MULTAN: Beekeeping is emerging as a profitable and eco-friendly enterprise in Pakistan, and institutions like Muhammad Nawaz Sharif (MNS) University of Agriculture, Multan, are playing a crucial role in nurturing this potential. Each year, the university trains over 100 students and farmers in scientific beekeeping techniques, encouraging sustainable practices and entrepreneurship. Dr Mudassar Ali, Assistant Professor of Entomology at MNS University, said the university had registered two companies – Alishbah Honey and Honey World—to support honey production and expand its commercial potential. While the university itself remains focused on research and education, these companies aim to promote quality honey exports and modern beekeeping methods. Pakistan’s honey is widely appreciated in the Middle East for its unique taste and superior quality. According to experts, around 4,000 tons of honey are exported to Arab countries annually. The industry supports nearly 27,000 families and has the capacity to significantly boost national exports if modern techniques are adopted. Dr Mudassar explained that a single hive can produce up to 25 kilograms of honey annually, earning between PKR 15,000 to 25,000. —DNA

Aqua-Fire: The Weaponization of Water in South Asia

ERTAAN SIDDIQUI

From being the elixir of life to a potential catalyst for war, water, in South Asia, is metamorphosing into a contentious commodity. As tensions flare between nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan, their shared rivers have been transformed into a geopolitical flashpoint. The delicate balance of the Indus Waters Treaty, once heralded as a triumph of transboundary cooperation, is now in jeopardy, jeopardizing not just regional stability but the lives of millions. In the volatile political limbo of South Asia, particularly between nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan, water is no longer just a natural resource – it is a strategic instrument. The

term “Aqua-Fire”, though imaginative, captures a dangerous and very real possibility: the ignition of conflict through the manipulation of water resources. At the heart of this issue lies the “Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)”, a landmark agreement brokered by the World Bank in 1960, which has survived wars and diplomatic breakdowns between the two nations. Under the treaty, India gained control over the eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej), while Pakistan secured rights to the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab). It ensured water security for Pakistan’s agrarian economy and served as a model for transboundary water cooperation. However, recent developments such as the Pahalgam incident

and India’s belligerent rhetoric have jeopardized the longevity of the treaty. In the wake of potential military confrontation between the two arch rivals, the IWT has been thrust into the limelight, with debates swirling over its future. While the feasibility of India stifling the flow of water to Pakistan is subject to debate, the incident underscores the tenuous nature of regional relations. The possibility of India altering or cutting off water flow even partially raises grave humanitarian and environmental concerns. The rivers of the Indus basin are the lifeblood of Pakistan’s agriculture, drinking water, and energy production. The manipulation of these waters would not only cripple Pakistan’s economy but could spark an escalation

with unpredictable consequences. As “Leonardo da Vinci” famously noted, “Water is the driving force of all nature.” In this case, it could drive either cooperation or catastrophe. Turning rivers into weapons defies both ecological ethics and the principles of international law. It threatens not just regional peace, but the lives of millions dependent on these waters. Water should be a bridge, not a barrier. It should inspire collaboration, not conflict. The world must recognize that weaponizing water in a time of climate stress, population growth, and rising regional tensions is a perilous path. As “Benjamin Franklin” reminded us, “When the well’s dry, we know the worth of water.” Let not the people of South Asia learn this lesson through devastation and

loss. The consequences of turning rivers into weapons could be irreversible – ecological degradation, food insecurity, forced migration, and even full-scale war. In a region where millions already face water scarcity and climate vulnerability, such actions would amount to collective punishment and a humanitarian crisis. In the end, “Aqua-Fire” is not just a poetic juxtaposition – it is a stark warning. When water becomes fire, no one remains unburnt. The very resource that sustains life can also destroy it if manipulated with hostile intent. Peace and stability in South Asia cannot flow without the protection and preservation of its rivers. For where water is turned into fire, the flames are not just political – they are existential.

Briefs

Indian attempt to advance failed again

Indian fighters make emergency landing in Srinagar after Pakistan blocked their radars, on-board sensors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Since the Pahalgam incident, India has been trying to provoke Pakistan with its warmongering and aggressive actions near the border, but Pakistan has been showing restraint and has prevented India from any kind of aggression with timely defensive measures. Due to effective defensive measures, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) once again timely foiled India's attempt to advance towards Pakistan a few days ago, forcing India's modern Rafale aircraft to retreat.

Indian media runs misinformation drive

MONITORING DESK

NEW DELHI: As diplomatic tensions continue to rise between Pakistan and India following the deadly attack on tourists in IIOJK, a disturbing wave of misinformation and digitally manipulated content has emerged on Indian social media, much of it aiming to mislead, provoke, and obscure the truth. The attack in Pahalgam, which claimed the lives of 26 tourists last month, has not only escalated geopolitical hostilities but also triggered a surge of viral fake news and artificial intelligence-generated imagery. According to France 24 News, several widely circulated posts have wrongly identified victims and misrepresented events, fuelling confusion and further polarising audiences in India. One such example is a widely shared video of a couple dancing in the Pahalgam valley, falsely claimed to be the final moments of the late Lieutenant Vinay Narwal and his wife. The video was picked up by multiple Indian news outlets and circulated extensively online. However, the couple in the video, Ashish and Yashika Sehrawat, later came forward to clarify that the footage had no connection to victims of attack.



ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani presents a cheque of Rs 1 million to Ambassador of Poland Maciej Pisarski. The amount, raised during a gala evening, will be donated to Pehli Kiran Schools (PKS). – DNA

'Global community supports peaceful resolution of Pakistan-India conflict'

"The Ambassador urged India not to delay further and to present its evidence truthfully, emphasizing that the world is growing increasingly impatient with India's lack of transparency and evidence-based approach"

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador to the US Rizwan Saeed Sheikh noted Sunday that the international community, including the United States, supports a peaceful resolution to the Pakistan-India conflict, seeking a durable solution to the Kashmir issue. In a candid interview with PTV News, Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh asserted that the global community is unequivocally backing peace in the region, rejecting one-sided support in favour of a truth-driven and evidence-based resolution to the Pakistan-India conflict. Ambassador noted that US President Donald Trump has always supported peace in the region, aiming to leave a legacy of peace efforts, which resonates with Pakistan's commitment to peaceful resolution. He appreciated the US for its balanced approach and evidence-based stance on the Pakistan-India conflict, welcoming the focus on facts and peaceful resolution. He further mentioned that the Kashmir issue was a critical flashpoint, emphasizing that for any administration prior-



itizing global peace, resolving this longstanding dispute is crucial. Rizwan Saeed stressed that ending the animosity between Pakistan and India is essential for achieving lasting peace in the region, particularly in Kashmir. Respond-

ing to a query, Ambassador noted that the world has been watching India's actions for over 12 days, yet no evidence has been presented. He emphasized that without credible evidence, India's propaganda efforts will fail, as the international community is growing tired of India's tactics and demands the truth. He also pointed out that India's own faults, such as the Pehlghama incident, have exposed the truth about its administration's actions. He further lauded Pakistan for its commendable approach, highlighting the country's commitment to an unbiased inquiry and its demonstration of a responsible and mature role. This approach, he noted, reflects Pakistan's dedication to transparency, fairness and diplomacy, setting a positive example in the region, he added. "The Ambassador urged India not to delay further and to present its evidence truthfully, emphasizing that the world is growing increasingly impatient with India's lack of transparency and evidence-based approach." – DNA

Atta Tarar says

Government committed to promote responsible, independent journalism

The Ministry of Information was in touch with all journalistic organizations, Attaullah Tarar said, adding it will provide all possible support to resolve the challenges faced by journalistic institutions

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Sunday that the government fully believed in press freedom and it was committed to promoting a responsible, independent and professional journalism together with all stakeholders. He said this in a congratulatory message to the newly elected office bearers of the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE). The Federal Information Minister congratulated CPNE's newly elected President Kazim Khan, Secretary General Ghulam Nabi

Chandio, Senior Vice President Ayaz Khan and Deputy Secretary General Tanveer Shaukat. The minister said that the success of the newly elected leadership of CPNE was a reflection of the confidence of the journalistic community. He hoped that the new leadership of CPNE would play a positive role in protecting the rights of journalists, promoting professional standards and safeguarding national interests. The Ministry of Information was in touch with all journalistic organizations, Attaullah Tarar said, adding it will provide all possible support to resolve the challenges faced by journalistic institutions. – DNA



UN agency warns funding crisis increases danger, risks for refugees

UNITED NATIONS: A global funding crisis, including cuts from the US, is placing refugees – who cannot return home due to war or persecution – is increasing danger and risks, according to a report. The warning came from the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) which said that humanitarian resource were running dry and that critical support for millions of forcibly displaced people is under threat. UNHCR said that two-thirds of countries hosting refugees are already severely overstretched and urgently need support to continue providing education, health-care and shelter. Global solidarity with those fleeing conflict and violence is weakening, the agency added. "The safety that refugees seek in neighbouring countries is at risk," said Elizabeth Tan, Director of International Protection at UNHCR. "Without international solidarity and burden-sharing, the institution of asylum is under threat." Ms Tan noted that some 12,000 Central African refugees in Chad and Cameroon have expressed a desire to return home but cannot do so safely without transport and reintegration assistance. "No one wants to be a refugee for life," she said. – Agencies

Singapore ruling party wins election in landslide

SINGAPORE: Voters have handed Singapore's long-time ruling party a landslide election victory, offering Prime Minister Lawrence Wong a clear mandate to navigate the trade-orientated Southeast Asian nation through economic upheaval sparked by looming US tariffs. Wong's People's Action Party took all but 10 seats in the 97-seat unicameral legislature with a total of 65.57 percent of the more than 2.4 million votes cast in Saturday's polls. "Singaporeans gave the PAP a strong mandate to govern," Wong told a news conference hours after the official results were announced. "The results will put Singapore in a better position to face this turbulent world," he said, adding they were a "clear signal of trust, stability and confidence in your government". – Agencies

Chinese president to visit Russia on May 7-10: Kremlin

MOSCOW: Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit Russia on May 7-10 and join Vladimir Putin at the 80th commemoration of the Allied victory against Nazi Germany, the Kremlin said on Sunday. The Russian president's office said Xi would also hold bilateral talks with Putin on "developing partnerships and strategic ties" and on "issues on the international and regional agenda". "The governments and ministers... are expected to sign a series of bilateral documents," it added. Putin has ordered a three-day truce in the war in Ukraine to coincide with Russia's World War II commemorations on May 9, which Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has dismissed as theatrics. – APP

IMF Executive Director terminated

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: India's Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has announced that KV Subramanian, executive director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was terminated – six months ahead of his three-year term – Indian media quoted sources as saying on Saturday. The reasons for Subramanian's sacking by the Indian government have not been made public, but the sources stated that the government would shortly nominate a replacement to the IMF board.

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