



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

UxS stopped war between Pakistan, India, says Trump

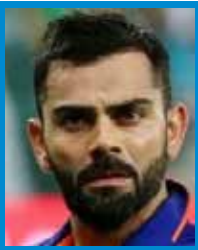
Detailed News On Page-08

Mashall calls for release of all prisoners

Detailed News On Page-04

Kohli announces retirement from Test cricket

Detailed News On Page-06



Stand-off with India

Pak indebted to Türkiye for support: PM

Ambassador Neziroglu conveyed President Erdogan's greetings and congratulations to the Prime Minister and the Pakistani nation on their military and diplomatic success. He praised Pakistan's commitment to peace and affirmed Türkiye's continued support in further strengthening bilateral cooperation in all fields

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye, Irfan Neziroglu, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif this evening in Islamabad. The meeting, held in an atmosphere of warmth and mutual respect, underscored the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Türkiye. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed deep appreciation to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for his unwavering support to Pakistan during the recent tensions in South Asia. He lauded President Erdogan's steadfast stance as a true reflection of the deep-rooted affection and solidarity the Turkish leadership and people hold for Pakistan. He also extended heartfelt thanks to the people of Türkiye for standing shoulder to shoulder with their Pakistani brethren during testing times, adding that their support had written a new and glorious chapter in the shared history of Pakistan-Türkiye relations. While paying tribute to Pakistan's

PM welcomes PKK's dissolution announcement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said Pakistan welcomed the announcement of PKK's (the Kurdistan Workers' Party) dissolution, a significant step toward lasting peace and a terror-free Türkiye. "This historic development reflects

Armed Forces for the successful execution of "Operation Bunyan un Marsoos," the Prime Minister highlighted their strategic excellence in thwarting hostile designs. He emphasized that while Pakistan desires lasting peace

the unflinching resolve of the Turkish leadership, under my dear brother President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Turkish nation, to continue their march forward towards reconciliation, unity and stability," the prime minister posted on X handle. Together, he further posted Pakistan and Türkiye remained committed to root out terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

in the region, it will never compromise on its sovereignty or territorial integrity. In this context, he reiterated Pakistan's commitment to peace,

Continued on Page 06

PM greets nation; forces

Pakistan announces completion of Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos

The military has name the clashes with India from April 22 to May 10 as "Battle of Truth" and released details

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has officially declared the conclusion of its military counter-offensive, Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos, marking a significant phase in the recent escalation with India. The operation, conducted in response to Indian military provocations, targeted numerous Indian military installations between May 6 and May 10, as confirmed by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). The ISPR disclosed that Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos was a carefully calibrated response aimed at deterring further aggression and reasserting Pakistan's strategic capabilities. The strikes, described as precise and proportionate, were carried out across multiple sectors along the Line of Control (LoC) and beyond, signaling Pakistan's resolve to protect its sovereignty.

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Pakistan-India military operations chiefs hold talks by phone

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The military operations chiefs of India and Pakistan held talks by phone on Monday evening, broadcaster CNN-News18 said, two days after the nuclear-armed neighbours reached a ceasefire agreement following intense fighting last week. The Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of both countries held the first round of talks on hotline following the ceasefire, sources told Geo News.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan Amb. Irfan Neziroglu calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

Reserved seats SC to hear review petitions today

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court will hear review petitions, challenging the verdict on reserved seats on Tuesday. The hearing will be conducted by an 11-member constitutional bench, headed by senior judge, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan. The bench also includes Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Musarrat Hilali, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan, Justice Hashim Khan Kakar, Justice Aamer Farooq, Justice Salahuddin Panhwar, and Justice Ali Baqar Najafi. In the previous hearing, Advocate Hamid Khan had submitted a request for adjournment on behalf of Faisal Siddiqi, counsel for the Sunni Ittehad Council.

DPM Dar, UK FS Lammy discuss regional development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and United Kingdom Foreign Secretary David Lammy discussed the latest developments in the region. The DPM/FM received a call from the UK foreign secretary, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. Foreign Secretary David Lammy appreciated Pakistan's efforts towards maintaining regional peace. Both sides agreed to maintain close coordination on areas of mutual interest.

Tariffs row resolved?

US and China reach deal to slash tariffs

Two sides had agreed on 90 day pause on measures, says US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent

CENTRELINE REPORT

GENEVA: The United States and China said on Monday they have agreed a deal to slash reciprocal tariffs for now as the world's two biggest economies seek to end a trade war that has disrupted the global outlook and set financial markets on edge. Speaking after talks with Chinese officials in Geneva, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told reporters the two sides had agreed on a 90 day pause on measures and that tariffs would come down by over 100 percentage points to 10%. "Both countries represented their national interest very well," Bessent said. "We both have an interest in balanced trade, the US will continue moving towards that." Bessent was speaking alongside US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer after the weekend talks in which both sides had hailed progress on narrowing differences.

Continued on Page 06

China welcomes ceasefire between India, Pakistan

DNA

BEIJING: China welcomes ceasefire between India and Pakistan and stand ready to play role in keeping the region peaceful and stable, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Lin Jian said on Monday. "China noted the reports. The ceasefire between India and Pakistan serves the fundamental and long-term interests of the two countries, contributes to regional peace and stability and meets the common aspiration of the international community. China supports and welcomes this,"

Continued on Page 06

PTI rifts deepen?

Imran Khan asks Junaid to 'step down' as PAC chief

Junaid Akbar may be replaced by Omar Ayub as PAC chief

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has instructed party MNA Junaid Akbar to step down from his post as chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), party sources confirmed on Monday. According to sources, Khan's message was conveyed to the party leadership by his sister, Aleema Khan. A written directive from the former prime minister was delivered to PTI Chairman Barrister

Gohar Ali Khan and Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, asking Akbar to relinquish the role and focus entirely on his responsibilities within the party. Insiders have suggested that Omar Ayub, a senior PTI figure, is likely to be nominated as the new PAC chairman to replace Akbar – who is the PTI's president for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Commenting on the development, Akbar said he would comply with the directive whenever Khan formally asks him to resign.

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A right time to redefine a new political order

COMMENT

ANSAR M BHATTI



WITH a fragile ceasefire now in place between Pakistan and India after a brief but intense exchange of hostilities, there lies an opportunity—perhaps a rare one—for deep introspection, particularly within Pakistan's own political structure. While the military has once again proven its capability to respond effectively to external aggression, the short conflict also highlighted an equally vital element: the importance of internal political harmony in matching enemy threats and maintaining national cohesion. The recent crisis underscored that a nation's strength lies not just in its military prowess but in the unity and clarity of its political direction. In this moment of post-conflict reflection, it is imperative that Pakistan reconsiders and, where necessary, redefines its internal political

order for the greater national good. The current system, marred by division, mistrust, and selective justice, needs urgent repair if Pakistan is to move forward as a stable and resilient state. At the core of this needed transformation is the principle that the country's interest must be kept paramount over individual egos and political grudges. Pakistan's turbulent recent history—punctuated by political witch hunts, selective accountability, and the marginalization of key political players—has weakened its democratic institutions and undermined the people's confidence in the political process. It is time to ensure a level playing field for all political parties, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which despite its contentious relationship with state institutions, remains one of the most popular political forces in the country. Whether one agrees or disagrees with PTI's policies or rhetoric, it is undeniable that millions of Pakistanis see the party, and particularly Imran Khan, as their chosen representatives. Ignoring or suppressing this political reality not only risks further instability but also damages the democratic fabric of the state. The need for redefining relations with PTI is not merely about appeasement; it

is about practical statesmanship. In the recent conflict, PTI's social media apparatus—often labeled as a thorn in the side of the establishment—surprisingly showed maturity by rallying behind the military in the face of foreign aggression. This gesture of unity, despite underlying grievances, deserves recognition and reciprocity. Political inclusivity, rather than exclusion, will strengthen the country's ability to present a unified front both domestically and internationally. One significant step toward healing would be the release of Imran Khan from jail, not as a concession, but as a step toward greater political harmony. If the establishment were to support this move, it could gain public respect and demonstrate a commitment to genuine democratic values. In return, it is expected—reasonably so—that Imran Khan would also demonstrate statesmanship by adjusting his political strategy to the ground realities and working toward establishing a functional relationship with the establishment for the good of the country. There is an old saying: "Never waste a good crisis." The war, unfortunate as it was, created space for internal realignment. The existential threat from across the border forced various political actors to see beyond their narrow agendas and realize that Pakistan's survival

and prosperity depend on unity, not division. This moment should not be wasted. Political reconciliation now could lead to a stable future. The possibility of early, free, and fair elections in which all political parties, including PTI and Imran Khan, are allowed to participate without hurdles, may offer a viable path toward political stability. The international community, investors, and even Pakistan's own citizens are watching closely. They want to see whether Pakistan is ready to chart a new course that puts democracy, transparency, and inclusion at the forefront. Pakistan's enemies had hoped to exploit our divided political landscape and fraying national fabric. The attempted incursions and strikes were not just acts of war—they were a test of our internal strength. That test has revealed our vulnerabilities, but also our potential. We have seen that, even in a politically fractured environment, a spark of unity can ignite collective strength. However, let's not be under any illusions: economic recovery and long-term national strength cannot be achieved in a politically unstable environment. Wars are fought—and won—by nations with robust economies, resilient institutions, and united populations. Pakistan's current economic state is dire. Inflation is sky-high, foreign

reserves are dwindling, and the IMF continues to dictate terms. Without political stability, there can be no investor confidence, and without investment, there can be no sustainable growth. Thus, better sense must prevail—among all stakeholders. The establishment must realize that its role is to support, not steer, the democratic process. Political parties must understand that rhetoric alone cannot replace governance, and mutual respect is the foundation of lasting cooperation. The judiciary, media, and civil society must also play their part in fostering accountability without bias. In conclusion, this is not just a political moment—it is a national one. A time to look beyond individual ambitions and work collectively for the survival and success of Pakistan. The war may have been short-lived, but its message was clear: a divided nation is a vulnerable one. Let us not wait for another crisis to teach us the same lesson. Pakistan today stands at a crossroad. One path leads to reconciliation, reform, and resurgence. The other, to continued polarization, economic decay, and eventual collapse. The choice, as always, lies in the hands of those who lead us—but the consequences will be borne by every citizen of this country. It is indeed the right time to redefine a new political order—before it's too late.

Briefs

Mohsin Naqvi visits family of martyred Ali

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the residence of Shaheed Ali Haider in Lahore and expressed condolence to the grieving family. Haider, the only brother of eight sisters, embraced martyrdom in a recent Indian drone attack near Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. Haider had been the only breadwinner of his family who supported his parents and eight sisters, the minister said, adding that now, the state would take on that responsibility.

NA expresses solidarity with armed forces

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly unanimously passed a resolution expressing solidarity with the armed forces of Pakistan. The resolution was tabled by Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar. Speaking on the occasion, the law minister said that the motion was prepared in consultation with all the political parties.

SC to hear Super Tax Case on Tuesday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan will hear the case related to the imposition of super tax on Tuesday. The hearing will be conducted by a five-member constitutional bench headed by Senior Judge Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan.

Punjab CM okays wheat support subsidy for farmers

During the meeting, it was revealed that farmers have already utilized Rs 36 billion through the Kissan Card facility to purchase agricultural inputs

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved a wheat support subsidy of Rs 5,000 per acre for 600,000 farmers under the 'Kissan Card' initiative. Farmers who are not currently registered under the Kissan Card program will also be eligible to receive the same per-acre subsidy. Chairing a special meeting, here on Monday, the CM announced that billions of rupees in additional subsidies will be allocated for the upcoming

crop season. She emphasized the government's continued commitment to supporting farmers and strengthening the agricultural sector. During the meeting, it was revealed that farmers have already utilized Rs 36 billion through the Kissan Card facility to purchase agricultural inputs. Of the loans issued through the program, 60 percent have been disbursed, and farmers have successfully repaid Rs 22 billion. A second round of payments has now been issued to support the new crop cycle. Officials also informed that 50

percent of the applications received for the wheat support program have been verified so far. The meeting included a detailed review of implementation proposals for the wheat support program, including a recommendation to extend eligibility to land contractors in addition to landowners. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif also reviewed the progress of the agricultural tube wells solarization scheme, reiterating her government's vision of modernizing Punjab's agriculture through sustainable and farmer-friendly initiatives.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar discusses recent regional developments with a delegation of former foreign secretaries during the meeting.

Flying drones, quadcopters banned under Section 144

PESHAWAR: District administration Peshawar under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedural Code (CrPC) has banned the flights of drones and quadcopters within the district with immediate effect. The decision has been taken in light of the prevailing law & order situation across the region, to maintain peace and harmony in the district to avoid any untoward incident and reduce the chances of panic, chaos and confusion emanating from flights of drones and quadcopters in the district. Anyone found violating the ban would be proceeded against under Section 188 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). The ban came into force forthwith would remain in enforced for a period of one month (30 days) unless and until modified or withdrawn.—APP

Cops suspended for making social media video during duty

LAKKI MARWAT: Seven police personnel, including a sub-inspector, have been suspended here for making a social media video during duty hours. According to a police spokesperson, District Police Officer (DPO) Jawad Ishaq took strict notice on Monday after a video surfaced showing seven officials of the Rapid Response Force (RRF) filming content while on duty. The DPO ordered the immediate suspension and reassignment of sub-inspector Syed Ayaz Khan, along with six other RRF personnel.—APP

Bugti orders ulift projects completion by stipulated time

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Monday issued strict directives to all provincial departments to ensure the timely completion of ongoing development projects under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), warning that funds allocated to slow-moving projects will be diverted to more active and fast-progressing initiatives. The directives were given during a high-level meeting held at the Chief Minister's Secretariat on Monday to review the implementation of the PSDP. The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister for Communications and Works Mir Saleem Khan Khosa, Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nosherwani, Chief Secretary Balochistan Shaheel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary for Development Hafiz Abdul Basit,

and secretaries of all provincial departments. During the briefing by the Planning and Development Department, the Chief Minister expressed serious displeasure over delays in certain departmental projects. He criticized the failure to procure just 21 buses despite a full year having passed. "This is completely unacceptable. These buses must be operational before June to provide better transportation services to the public," he said, directing the Transport Department to utilize all available resources for immediate completion of the project. CM Bugti emphasized that any department failing to complete its projects by June will face funding cuts. He ordered that the financial resources of under process schemes be reallocated to projects that are progress-

ing efficiently and nearing completion. Particular concern was raised regarding several sports department projects pending since 2015. The Chief Minister condemned the nine-year delay as alarming and instructed relevant authorities to identify those responsible and ensure accountability. He noted that delays in development projects not only cause inconvenience to the public but also lead to increased costs, putting extra strain on the provincial treasury. "All approved projects must be completed on time. Deadlines set for various departments must be strictly followed," Bugti warned. He called on all secretaries to personally supervise their respective projects with diligence and seriousness to ensure measurable progress.

Int'l Nurses Day observed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: International Nurses Day observed in Pakistan and around the world on Monday under the theme "Our Nurses, Our Future. The Economic Power of Care."

Talking to a private news channel on the occasion, Murad Ali and Ateeqa Nadeem from Sindh Integrated Emergency & Health Services highlighted the importance of first aid training for the general public. Murad Ali noted that while nurses play a key role in emergencies, the real response starts at the scene but public unawareness often delays help. Ateeqa Nadeem noted that in many emergency situations, immediate first aid by bystanders can save lives before medical professionals arrive. Murad Ali emphasized that every citizen should have basic knowledge of handling accident scenarios. Simple actions like controlling bleeding or checking for breathing can greatly improve survival chances. Both experts urged the need for regular community training sessions and greater public awareness to strengthen the first response in emergencies.

Pak gives befitting response to India's aggression: Muqam

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister and PML-N leader Ameer Muqam said here Monday that Pakistan's effective security measures against blatant Indian aggression have made it clear to the world how strong and capable the Pakistan Army is. He said that Pakistan's stature has risen both nationally and internationally after performing role of a responsible state. Speaking at a ceremony of the Peshawar High Court Bar Association, Ameer Muqam said that regarding the Pahalgam incident, Pakistan openly

took the world to come and conduct an independent investigation.

He added that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz also took a clear stance that a transparent inquiry should be conducted so that the facts could come to light. The Federal Minister said that India tried to defame Pakistan by making false accusations, but instead, it ended up exposing itself negatively before the world. He said that India not only filed a baseless FIR and

faced embarrassment, but its stance also weakened on the international front. On this occasion, Federal Minister Ameer Muqam said that the entire Pakistani nation showed complete unity and solidarity with the Pakistan Armed Forces, and this unity is our greatest strength. "Now is the time for all of us to come together and think about Pakistan, putting national security above personal interests." He also congratulated the newly elected cabinet of the High Court Bar Association and said that the legal community has always played a key role in pulling the country out of constitutional crises. Ameer Muqam assured that the government would extend all possible cooperation to resolve the issues faced by lawyers.—APP

Govt approves upgrade of Gujrat park with Rs 54m

MUNEEB UR REHMAN

GUJRAT: The Punjab government has approved the upgrade of the Shehbaz Sharif Park at the cost of Rs54m. Spread over 90 acres at the bank of river Chenab on the Gujrat side, the park is the largest recreational facility in the region. The people of Gujrat, Wazirabad, Phalia, Alipur Chatha and adjoining areas of the district would also visit the park on special oc-

casions and weekends. Official sources said that the upgrade scheme had been proposed by the district administration, keeping in view the visitors' feedback. The scheme includes development of a lake with boating facility as well as the installation of swings and new lights whereas a cafeteria and construction of offices for the managerial staff is also on the cards. The project got special approval from the cabinet more than a month ago. It

is learnt that following the approval in the cabinet, the Local Government and Community Development Department, has sent the matter to the Planning and Development for further action. An official of Gujrat District Council says the execution of the project might be launched within the current fiscal year; however, the full funding of the scheme would be released in the next fiscal year. He added that new facilities and attractions

for the families and children would increase the footfall in the park. Meanwhile, the Punjab government has also approved construction of the Union Council Complex in Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman's native Chelianwala village in district Mandi Bahauddin at the cost of Rs100m. The Chelianwala union council has already been developed as a 'model UC' with the improvement of basic infrastructure and amenities.

Kundi assures resolution of Mohmand, Kurram delegations demands

DNA

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday assured a visiting delegation from District Mohmand of swift action on their key demands, pledging to address longstanding issues related to education, healthcare, and infrastructure on a priority basis. A delegation from District Mohmand led by the Asghar Khan, Chairman of Asgher Mohmand Foundation met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi here at Governor House. The delegation presented key demands related to technical education, digital courses, support for special persons and orphans, and skill development opportunities. During the meeting,

the delegation highlighted that District Mohmand is rich in minerals but suffers from a severe lack of basic facilities. Many residents are forced to go abroad for employment due to the absence of local economic opportunities. Education, healthcare, and infrastructure in the district have been severely neglected, and patients often have to travel to Peshawar for medical treatment. The delegation emphasized the urgent need for technical and vocational education, particularly for the youth. They also called for compensation for young individuals affected by terrorism, which has further disrupted educational progress in the area. Governor Kundi responded positively, assuring the delegation of his full support and a commitment to resolving

the issues on priority bases. He said that many of these challenges would have to be addressed at the provincial level, especially following the 18th Amendment, which transferred key powers to the provinces. He encouraged the delegation to also approach the Chief Minister through their elected representatives, adding that the merger of FATA has placed many responsibilities under the Chief Minister's purview. The Governor further said that his office operates with an open-door policy and invited the delegation to formally submit a written request so he could personally raise the matter with the Chief Secretary. Governor Kundi reaffirmed his commitment to supporting the people of Mohmand and ensuring their voices are heard at all

levels of governance. Meanwhile, the delegation from Central Kurram Para Chamkani, led by Shaukat Khan and Advocate Waheed Hashmi, met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi to discuss pressing issues affecting the people of the area. During the meeting, the delegation raised several key concerns, including the urgent need for the repair of the Central Kurram Para Chamkani Road, financial assistance for those affected in Bagan, and measures for the promotion of tourism in the area. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi acknowledged the importance of Kurram District, saying that while it holds significant cultural and economic value, recent unrest has negatively impacted local businesses, culture, and the overall lifestyle of residents. He

assured the delegation that he has already conducted various jirgas and meetings to address the situation and is committed to continuing efforts to restore peace and improve living conditions in Kurram. The Governor also highlighted that, unlike previous Governors who had powers over FATA, the 18th Constitutional Amendment has now devolved powers to the provincial governments. "My mission is to serve humanity," he added, saying that an open-door policy has been implemented at the Governor House to ensure the public can directly voice their concerns. Regarding the road repair, the Governor advised the delegation to submit a formal request, promising to discuss the matter with the Chief Secretary.

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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
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CDA committed for beautification of Islamabad: Randhawa

Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhwa instructed the allocation of a separate parking in Melody food street along with the installation of beautiful lighting so that citizens may not only have best of the best food quality besides parking facility

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting was held at the CDA Headquarters under the chairmanship of Chairman CDA, Chief Commissioner Islamabad and DG Civil Defense, Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The meeting was attended by members of the CDA Board, DG Building Control Authority, DG Works, DG Resources, DG Urban Planning, DG E&M, DG Services, Chief ICT Officer, Director DMA, and other senior officers. During the meeting, a review of CDA's overall performance along with a briefing on new projects was given. Instructions were issued for the upgradation of Melody Food Street and improving food quality standards as melody food street is one of the pioneer food street of the federal capital which was established by CDA thus inviting most of the notable and known food brands from the country. It was directed that Islamabad Food Authority may have food inspections of all food outlets throughout Islamabad so food quality and standard may not be compromised at any cost. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhwa instructed the allocation of a separate parking in Melody food street along with the installation of beautiful lighting so that citizens may not only have best of the best food quality besides parking facility. He also directed the establishment of a food street in Blue Area along with excellent landscaping, decorative lighting and dedicated parking space, emphasizing the need to make Blue Area Food Street operational as soon as possible so that people have choices to have best foods at almost all the major places of Islamabad. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa directed the formulation of an effective traffic plan for controlling traffic in all major city centers for addressing traffic jam issues especially at weekend thus ensuring strict traffic plan implementation to have smooth traffic flow for the ease of the citizens thus saving their time. He also directed the selection of suitable locations for vehicle bazars in the city. Further, a briefing was given on the upgradation of the Gandhara Heritage Club during the meeting. Chairman CDA instructed the completion of the remaining work on the Gandhara Heritage Club within the stipulated timeframe in consultations with stakeholders. He also ordered the replacement of faulty lights in all city parks, Margalla Road and other major roads with new lighting. Chairman CDA stated that the development, prosperity and beauty of Islamabad are our top priorities. He further emphasized the planting of environmentally friendly trees across the city, particularly along five major avenues Club Road, Faisal Avenue, Jinnah Avenue, Margalla Road, and Expressway as well as in other areas along with beautiful plants, trees and flowers.

Abbasi, WAPDA chief discuss stronger ties in energy sectors



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi and Chairman of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), Engineer Lt. Gen. (R) Sajjad Ghani met on Monday to explore ways to strengthen cooperation between their organizations for addressing Pakistan's energy and infrastructure challenges. During the meeting, Hanif Abbasi said that stronger collaboration between Pakistan Railways and WAPDA would not only boost the national economy but also ensure timely completion of development projects. He reaffirmed his commitment to using the combined resources and expertise of both institutions, calling the partnership a major step forward in national infrastructure development. Sajjad Ghani welcomed the initiative and assured full cooperation, saying WAPDA is ready to work with Pakistan Railways on new projects to help resolve the energy crisis and improve energy transmission systems. The meeting marked a significant step toward institutional collaboration, with a shared goal of enhancing energy delivery and launching joint ventures in the power and railway sectors for the country's progress.

25-year plantation plan along motorways discussed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A major national initiative is being launched to plant fruit-bearing trees and undertake large scale afforestation along with Motorways across the country. A comprehensive 25-year plan is being developed with involvement of government departments proposing to lease land to the private sector for this purpose. Immediate steps will be taken to make this proposal feasible and actionable which will be a milestone for green future of Pakistan. Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan while chairing a special meeting alongside Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr. Musadik Malik emphasized that making the environment greener and more pleasant is not only a social responsibility but also a moral and religious obligation, said a press release issued here on Monday. He stressed the need for integrated planning to plant trees not only along Motorways from Karachi to Quetta but also on National Highways in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. He called upon agricultural experts and farmers to actively participate in this noble cause and national drive. Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr. Musadik Malik directed the preparation of concrete proposals within the next three days and agreed to the implementation of the plan in collaboration with the Ministry of Communications. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan assured full support from his Ministry in terms of data sharing, land identification and other necessary aspects. He emphasized that improving the environment and enhancing the travel experience on Motorways is a top priority and fruit trees should be planted according to the agricultural suitability of each region. He further stated that expanding green areas along the Motorways would have a positive impact and this project would play a significant role in ensuring an eco-friendly future. The meeting was attended by the Chairman of the National Highway Authority, Inspector General of Motorway Police, and senior officials from the Ministry of Climate Change, who contributed various suggestions for the project.

Glacier Preservation moot to boost global water sustainability: Tajik envoy

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir, on Monday said that the three-day Dushanbe international glacier preservation conference will be a milestone for the global sustainability of the environment and water. Tajikistan is the home of glaciers and clean water in the world, and glaciers melting and climate change are the biggest issues for the world, and the glaciers preservation conference in Tajikistan is an endeavor to give the world a road map for resolving the biggest challenge of climate change and water sustainability, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir said told state run news agency here. The Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan said that the third High-Level International Conference dedicated to Glaciers' Preservation to be held on 29-31st May 2025 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, and the territory of Tajikistan has more than ten thousand mountain glaciers, the largest of which is the Vanch-Yakh (Fedchenko) glacier. Tajik envoy said that the initiative of Tajikistan was fully supported by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Pakistan is actively participating in the framework of this initiative. Participants of the conference will be invited to a post-conference field trip to observe glacier degradation, integrated water resources management practices, and water-related sustainable development examples in Tajikistan, he said. 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, he said. He said that within the framework of the High-Level International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation, free excursions are organized on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in several areas, which provide Conference participants with the opportunity to get personally acquainted with the rich history, culture and unique nature of Tajikistan. Replying to another question, he said the territory of Tajikistan was inhabited by people even before the middle of the 1st millennium BC, who created famous ancient states such as Sogdiana and Bactria. The Ambassador said that Modern Tajikistan carefully preserves the ancient historical and cultural heritage and revives original craft traditions and to this day, in many ancient cities of the republic, famous dynasties of masters of gold embroidery, masters of silk, abra, batik, gulduzi, skullcap embroiderers, weavers, jewelers, ceramists, whose products are known all over the world, have been preserved. The Hisor Fortress, the mausoleum of Khoja Mashhad, the remains of Buddhist monasteries from the 7th-8th centuries, and many other monuments will tell a lot about important milestones in the history of Tajikistan, he said. Replying to another question, he said that around 93 percent of the country's territory is occupied by majestic mountains that belong to the highest in the world including the 'Tien Shan, Pamir and Gissaro-Alai.

RCB water recovery surge to Rs 274m

RAWALPINDI: The Water Recovery Branch of the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has achieved a magnificent improvement in revenue collection for the fiscal year 2024-25. The recent revenue surged to Rs.274.0 million compared to previous year's Rs.260.0 million. A key factor in this increase has been the board's efforts to address the unassessed properties. Many property owners had obtained water connections from RCB but had not undergone property tax assessment, thereby avoiding revenue payments. A spokesman RCB informed that RCB has suspended general charges on these properties and directed owners to submit their property documents for formal assessment, as per the policy devised by the Military Lands and Cantonments (ML&C) Department. Under this initiative, RCB has assessed nearly 2,000 properties, assigning them Cantonment Board (CB) numbers and issuing revenue charges accordingly. Additionally, properties measuring less than five marlas have been granted tax exemptions as per generally practiced regulations, while water bills are being issued separately. This measure is expected to further improve recovery rates and curb illegal water distribution. The spokesman said that RCB remained committed to enhancing transparency and efficiency in revenue collection while ensuring compliance with legal frameworks. —APP

Thousands rush to apply for PM's youth Laptop scheme

ISLAMABAD: In a remarkable response, thousands of students have applied for the Prime Minister's youth Laptop Scheme in the past few days, with the deadline for application set to expire on May 20. According to official sources, the scheme's website has seen a significant spike in traffic, with thousands of students successfully submitting their applications. As part of the government's efforts to promote education and innovation, PMLS Phase-IV is now officially open for applications. The project aims to empower students by distributing 100,000 laptops to meritorious students studying at public sector universities across Pakistan. The government has announced the eligibility guidelines for the laptop distribution scheme, ensuring a fair and merit-based selection process. According to the guidelines, students pursuing higher education in recognized public sector institutions are eligible to apply. To qualify, students must be currently enrolled in PhD, MS/MPhil, Bachelor's, or Master's programs and meet specific academic requirements. A minimum CGPA of 2.80 or 60% marks is mandatory, while first-year students need to submit their HSSC marks. MS/PhD students in their first semester are required to submit the results of their previous degree. The distribution of laptops will also follow a quota system, with 18% reserved for students in Balochistan's higher education institutions and 5% for distance learning students. Within the distance learning quota, 2.5% will be allocated to Virtual University and 2.5% to Allama Iqbal Open University. Importantly, only currently enrolled students are eligible, and those who have already graduated are not entitled to benefit from the scheme, even if they applied during their enrollment. Laptops will be awarded based on inter-se merit within departments and degree programs, following a transparent selection process. Students can register through Prime Minister's Digital Youth Hub (DYH) App or Visit Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) official website: www.pmyp.gov.pk, which is now live and operational. All applicants are encouraged to apply early. A 15-day window will be provided to raise any objections or grievances once the provisional merit list is published. After addressing all concerns, the final merit list will be released. The Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme Phase-IV is more than just a government program but it's a symbol of hope and investment in the future of our students. It recognizes that in today's world, digital access is as vital as a textbook or a classroom. The scheme, a flagship program of the Prime Minister's office, has already started showing promising results, with thousands of students benefiting from the initiative. By providing laptops to talented and deserving students, the government aims to bridge the digital divide, foster innovation, and equip the next generation with the skills required to compete in the global economy. —DNA

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Briefs

**IRSA releases
181,120
cusecs water**

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 181,120 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 234,697 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1461.16 feet which was 59.16 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 118,900 cusecs and 82,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1143.20 feet, which was 93.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 44,700 cusecs and 28,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 127,541, 73,290, 48,069 and 14,020 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 40,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 11,547 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

**Students
celebrate
defence' victory
against enemy
aggression**

RAWALPINDI: After the restoration of education operation on Monday, a number of schools and colleges celebrated Pakistan victory during the recent East border escalation. The day started with special prayers in educational institutions followed by colourful activities to pay tribute to the armed forces. Allama Iqbal Mission High School organized a special event to celebrate Pakistan's triumph and paid a glowing tribute to the armed forces through patriotic performances, including tableaux and national songs. The event was attended by students, teachers, and Principal Misbah Tahir, who highlighted the key successes of the Pakistan Air Force and Army in defending the country. She recounted the bravery of Pakistani forces in "Operation Bunyanan Marsoos", emphasizing how the entire nation stood united like an "iron wall" against the enemy. Misbah also praised Pakistan's armed forces for their long and successful war against terrorism, stating that the country, as a front-line state, had eradicated the roots of this menace and had laid their precious lives. She reminded students of Pakistan's historic victories in the wars of 1965, 1971, Kargil, and 2019, as well as the recent conflict from May 07 to May 10, 2025, where Pakistan delivered a strong military response to India. The students, dressed in military uniforms, presented patriotic songs and performances, showcasing their pride in the nation's defenders. Muhammad Rizwan, principal Noor College addressed morning assembly in which he highlighted the recent developments and urged the youth to concentrate on promoting native culture and tradition which remain vital for an independent nation's progress. Similarly, students and teachers in the city's various other educational institutions organized events to pay tribute to the armed forces.—APP

Businesswomen express solidarity with Pak Army

Samina Fazil noted that during the recent Indian aggression, China and Turkey extended strong military support to Pakistan. At the same time, Arab countries offered moral backing, and the Pakistani people stood united like a fortified wall, a commendable display of national unity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Samina Fazil, the founder and President of the Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWC-CI), said on Monday that businesswomen deeply value the vital role played by the Pakistan Armed Forces in ensuring the country's security, stability, and sovereignty. She added that the Army's courageous and professional response has been a source of pride and encouragement for the nation. Under the leadership of General Asim Munir, the Pakistan Army has upheld national dignity and delivered a resolute response to the enemy on every front. Speaking at a press conference at the Islamabad Press Club, she highlighted the Army's impressive performance in a recent confrontation, noting that they have successfully delivered a significant and decisive defeat to India. Her remarks reflect a deep sense of pride in the military's achievements and the resilience exhibited during challenging circumstances. She stated that this remarkable success, coupled with India's disgraceful retreat, has significantly enhanced the global reputation of the Pakistan Army and Air Force. At the same time, India is left with no place to hide. She emphasised that India has



always stabbed Pakistan in the back; therefore, even during a ceasefire, full military preparedness must be maintained. Samina Fazil noted that during the recent Indian aggression, China and Turkey extended strong military support to Pakistan. At the same time, Arab countries offered moral backing, and the Pakistani people stood united like a fortified wall, a commendable display of national unity. She added that India miscalculated its strength and underestimated Pakistan, for

which it is now paying a heavy price. The Modi government is facing tough questions at home. Pakistan's counterattacks weakened India's defence and exposed the hollow nature of its military might. Samina Fazil said that India's war hysteria in the region has backfired. Narendra Modi's extremist policies and false claims put regional peace at risk. Still, he forgot that he was dealing with a nuclear-capable, sovereign nation unwilling to compromise on its independence or national security.

In retaliation, Pakistan precisely targeted and destroyed Indian airbases, missile defence systems, military intelligence centres, and other strategic installations. Pakistan has made it clear that it is fully prepared to defend the homeland with all its capabilities on every front. It is now evident to the world that India tried to exert pressure on Pakistan through a web of lies, including false claims of surgical strikes and downing a Pakistani F-16. Still, Pakistan is responding robustly, militarily,

and through diplomatic, cyber, and media channels. She warned that Modi may prolong the conflict to boost the morale of his military and salvage his political career. India may launch further attacks, and Pakistan must remain vigilant. If India continues with its aggression, Pakistan will continue to crush its nefarious ambitions and hegemonic designs. Samina Fazil praised the unity demonstrated by the Pakistani people during wartime. This unity, which was maintained despite the hostilities, consistently offered peace and was appreciated globally, should make us all proud and united as a nation. International media outlets exposed the false narrative spread by the Indian media. At the same time, Pakistan's transparent communication strategy helped the world understand the real situation. She concluded that the government, armed forces, industry, and media must jointly develop a long-term defence and diplomatic strategy. This strategy will ensure that any future aggression is met with a swift and effective response, making us all feel more secure and prepared. Former Chamber Presidents Rizwana Asif, Naema Ansari, and several other women entrepreneurs were also present at the occasion.

**RCB water
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RAWALPINDI: The Water Recovery Branch of the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has achieved a magnificent improvement in revenue collection for the fiscal year 2024-25. The recent revenue surged to Rs.274.0 million compared to previous year's Rs.260.0 million. A key factor in this increase has been the board's efforts to address the unassessed properties. Many property owners had obtained water connections from RCB but had not undergone property tax assessment, thereby avoiding revenue payments. A spokesman RCB informed that RCB has suspended general charges on these properties and directed owners to submit their property documents for formal assessment, as per the policy devised by the Military Lands and Cantonments (ML&C) Department. Under this initiative, RCB has assessed nearly 2,000 properties, assigning them Cantonment Board (CB) numbers and issuing revenue charges accordingly. Additionally, properties measuring less than five marlas have been granted tax exemptions as per generally practiced regulations, while water bills are being issued separately. This measure is expected to further improve recovery rates and curb illegal water distribution. The spokesman said that RCB remained committed to enhancing transparency and efficiency in revenue collection while ensuring compliance with legal frameworks.—APP

Cotton cultivation in Punjab reaches 2.116 m acres

The overall production target has been fixed at 10.18 million bales. To meet these goals, the government is focusing on the supply of high-yield, certified seeds and ensuring timely availability of essential agricultural inputs in major sowing zones.

ISLAMABAD: Cotton cultivation in Punjab has reached 2.116 million acres during the current Kharif season (2025-26), up from 1.806 million acres during the same period last year, according to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research. The province has set a target to cultivate cotton over 3.5 million acres this season, compared to a target of 3.221 million acres in the previous year. A ministry official told APP on Monday that approximately 60 percent of this year's sowing target has already been achieved. Efforts are underway to further promote cotton cultivation through the provision of key agricultural inputs such as certified seeds, pesticides, and fertilizers, the official added. In North Punjab—including areas such as Sargodha, Faisalabad, Lahore, and Sahiwal, the sowing target for the season was set at 400,000 acres, compared to 317,000 acres last year. So far, 218,000 acres have been cultivated, up from 184,000 acres during the corresponding period in 2024. A notable upward trend has also been recorded in South Punjab districts such as Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, and Bahawalpur, where sowing targets have been met by 61 percent. Cultivation in these areas has so far covered 1.898 million acres, an increase from 1.622 million acres in the same period last year. The official noted that the government is actively working to build the capacity of local farmers and improve crop management techniques in order to maximize yield. It is worth noting that the federal government has set a national cotton cultivation target of 2.2 million hectares for the 2025-26 Kharif season. The overall production target has been fixed at 10.18 million bales. To meet these goals, the government is focusing on the supply of high-yield, certified seeds and ensuring timely availability of essential agricultural inputs in major sowing zones.—DNA

Mushaal calls for release of all prisoners in IIOJK

Mushaal Hussein Mullick Chairperson Peace and Culture Organisation said that without solution of Kashmir issue peace is not possible in this region as India has always violated all peaceful efforts and human rights in IIOJK

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick Chairperson Peace and Culture Organisation and wife of Jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader Mohammad Yasin Malik has suggested that it was a suitable time for international community to play its vital role for the durable solution of longstanding Kashmir issue of this region. Addressing at a press

conference here on Monday, she said that without solution of Kashmir issue peace is not possible in this region as India has always violated all peaceful efforts and human rights in IIOJK. Mushaal has welcomed and thanked to all international community for playing role for ceasefire between Pakistan and India and highlighting Kashmir issue. She strongly condemned the Hindutva ideology of the Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP) in India as minorities are insecure and day by day many incident reported about the killing and looting of innocent peoples. She also give the suggestion to the government of Pakistan to demand the release of all political prisoners from India. Thousands of Kashmiris had offered sacrifices their lives in the movement of Kashmir freedom and now the time has come to resolve this issues for durable peace in the region. She said that

Narendra Modi is not mentally fit to run the country as pushing the state into the war. Mushaal also show the solidarity with Afghan people as India has fired many missiles on the territory of Afghanistan to defame Pakistan but badly exposed badly in this nefarious act. She appreciated the role of social media activist in this current situation. She commended armed forces for giving a befitting response to India in coordinated manner.

Historic unity across fronts

Military, public, media, institutions stand as one

ISLAMABAD: In a powerful display of national solidarity, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry participated in the "Pakistan Zindabad Rally" last day, underscoring the nation's unwavering support for the Pakistan Armed Forces. Marking the "Day of Gratitude," the rally drew massive crowds, including Federal Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi, senior PML-N leaders, and citizens from all walks of life, who united to honor the armed forces' sacrifices and reaffirm Pakistan's indomitable spirit. Speaking at the rally Barrister Danyal said "By the grace of Allah, the unbreakable bond between our armed forces and the people has thwarted every hostile scheme against Pakistan. The world now recognizes Pakistan as a sovereign, resilient, and unconquerable nation, steadfast in defending its sovereignty. Our military leadership, citizens, media, and state institutions have scripted history through unparalleled unity and resolve. This victory—on strategic, diplomatic, and moral fronts—is a testament to our collective will!" He praised the leadership of the prime minister, stating "Under the prime minister's steadfast guidance, the nation stood as one. He is the beacon of unity who led Pakistan to triumph with moral clarity and an unshakable spirit." He issued a firm reminder to adversaries, stating "Let there be no doubt: Pakistan's people and armed forces are an unyielding fortress, impervious to aggression. Should any hostile force dare test our resolve, it will confront a nation united in purpose, ready to defend its sovereignty with unwavering strength."—DNA

**RIC takes
initiative with
blood donation
drive**

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology (RIC) has organized a blood donation camp exclusively for its staff members to increase emergency blood reserves. Doctors, nurses and administrative personnel of the hospital voluntarily donated blood to prepare for potential shortages during critical situations amid the recent escalation on border. Dr Abdul Maalik, Medical Superintendent RIC, in an exclusive talk with APP on Monday said that the hospital must maintain reserves so that if any problem arises, it can fully meet the demand. "Whether it's a shortage or sudden emergency, we shouldn't find ourselves helpless", he added. The campaign began by motivating hospital staff first. "We started this internally because our team understands the urgency best," said Dr. Maalik who is a cardiac surgeon (paediatric) at the hospital.—DNA

Businessmen pay tribute to Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The business community and presidents of trader organizations of Islamabad, under the leadership of Secretary General of United Business Group (FPCCI) Zafar Bakhtawari and President of Anjuman Tajiran Pakistan Ajmal Baloch, visited the mausoleum of Mohsin-e-Pakistan (Benefactor of Pakistan) Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan. They laid floral wreaths and showered petals on his grave. On this occasion, they paid rich tribute to his unparalleled services in making Pakistan a nuclear power. Presidents and leaders of various markets and trade organizations praised Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan's contributions to the nation, stating that he is a national

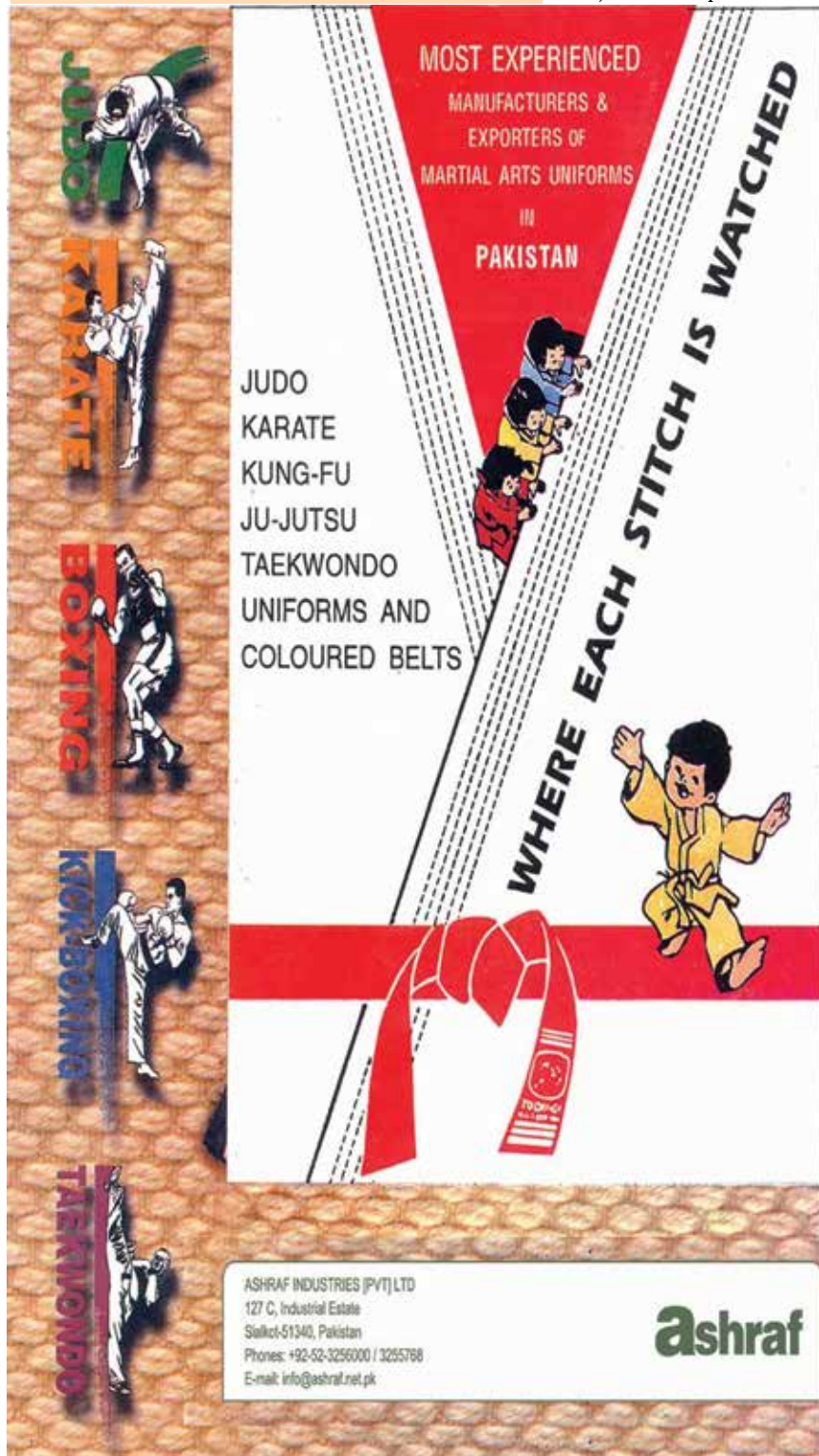
hero who played a key role in making Pakistan's defense invincible. Participants prayed for his forgiveness and elevated ranks in the hereafter and vowed to continue his mission. Speaking on the occasion, Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan is an ideological state founded on the Kalima Tayyiba (the Islamic

declaration of faith) and the two-nation theory. Islam is its foundation, and it was made to last forever. The entire nation is indebted to Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan for the services he rendered to make this country undefeatable till the end of time. Today, by visiting his grave, we are here to express our



gratitude. Ajmal Baloch stated that Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan materialized the dreams of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal in such a way that he will be remembered forever. ICC Vice President Nasir Chaudhry said that just as Pakistan achieved victory under the leadership of General Asim Munir against India, we pray that our country continues to triumph over its enemies and that the nation always holds its head high with pride. Other prominent attendees included Naem Akhtar Awan (President G-11 Markaz), Zargham Shah (President D-12), Iftikhar Abbasi (President E-11), Tahir Abbasi (Group Leader F-10 Markaz), Yousaf Rajput (Group Leader Blue Area), Khalid

Chaudhry (General Secretary Traders Action Committee), Waheed Cheema (President I-8 Markaz), Zafar Iqbal Gujar (President G-10), Altaf Hussain Shah (President G-7 Markaz), Irfan Chaudhry (President Steel Market), Akhtar Hussain Abbasi (General Secretary Aabpara Market), Khurshed Qureshi (President Jamiat Al-Quraish), Rouhail Anwar Butt (Executive Member ICCI), and former ICCI Vice President Nisar Mirza, Tahmas Butt, Adil Barkat, along with a large number of trader leaders. This dignified event once again highlighted the fact that the Pakistani nation never forgets its benefactors and that the trader community will continue to show its love and loyalty to the homeland at every level.



Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 13

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

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Dialogue without deadlines: A fragile hope for peace in Ukraine

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin's recent announcement expressing willingness to engage in dialogue with Ukraine marks a significant moment in the ongoing war. After more than two years of brutal conflict, the Kremlin's indication that it may be open to negotiation offers a glimmer of hope for a war-weary region and a concerned international community. Yet, this potential shift towards diplomacy comes with a caveat – there is still no confirmed date or framework for a ceasefire, casting doubt over the sincerity and immediacy of this overture. Equally important is the response from Kyiv. Ukrainian leadership has shown readiness to participate in talks and has voiced support for a cessation of hostilities. President Volodymyr Zelensky and his administration have consistently maintained that peace must be achieved through meaningful dialogue, though not at the cost of Ukraine's sovereignty or territorial integrity. The current posture from both sides suggests that diplomacy, long overshadowed by guns and missiles, may once again be on the table. However, optimism must be tempered by caution. Russia's previous signals toward diplomacy have often been contradicted by actions on the ground. The lack of a declared ceasefire or even a date for beginning talks makes it difficult to assess how serious Moscow truly is about ending the conflict. Without a concrete timeline or conditions, the announcement risks being little more than a political maneuver to relieve international pressure or manipulate the narrative ahead of global summits. For Ukraine, the stakes are equally high. Any negotiations must ensure that the sacrifices of its people are not in vain and that peace does not come at the cost of unjust concessions. Ukraine's insistence on a full withdrawal of Russian forces and the restoration of its territorial boundaries remains central to any future settlement. The international community must play a constructive role in this critical moment. Western powers, including the EU and the U.S., should encourage dialogue while also ensuring that any peace process is grounded in international law and justice. Neutral countries and international organizations such as the UN could help broker and monitor discussions to ensure transparency and fairness. In conclusion, while Putin's announcement and Ukraine's willingness to engage in dialogue represent a step away from confrontation, peace remains elusive until both sides commit to an immediate and verifiable ceasefire. Words alone cannot end wars – only actions can. The world watches and waits, hoping that this moment marks the beginning of the end of a devastating chapter in European history.

Trump's Kashmir mediation offer: A diplomatic mirage

US President Donald Trump's recent remarks offering to mediate on the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan should be taken with a healthy dose of skepticism. Known for his frequent flip-flops and unpredictable statements, Trump's latest intervention appears more like a calculated geopolitical maneuver than a genuine peace initiative. The timing and tone of his comments raise eyebrows. When India launched aggressive military actions against Pakistan, the U.S. maintained a deafening silence, brushing the conflict aside as an internal matter. Yet, when Pakistan responded, and it became increasingly evident that India was facing a significant challenge on the battlefield, Trump suddenly emerged as a peace-maker. This shift indicates not a balanced concern for peace but rather a strategic alignment favoring India. It is no secret that the U.S. has deepened its ties with India over recent years. From defense deals to economic partnerships, Washington views New Delhi as a crucial counterbalance to China in the Indo-Pacific region. Trump's statement, therefore, seems less about resolving the long-standing Kashmir dispute and more about protecting a key ally from military embarrassment. The selective nature of U.S. engagement in South Asia underscores the growing perception that Washington is far closer to New Delhi than to Islamabad. This dynamic was evident in the way Trump's administration framed the narrative – downplaying Indian aggression and highlighting the need for restraint only when Pakistan asserted itself. Despite the dubious motivations behind Trump's offer, the broader idea of a ceasefire deserves attention. Both India and Pakistan are nuclear-armed nations with a history of conflict and mistrust. Escalations like the recent flare-up not only threaten regional stability but also global security. A ceasefire, therefore, is not merely a tactical pause but a crucial step towards de-escalation and dialogue. For peace to be sustainable, however, it must be built on mutual respect, genuine diplomacy, and a commitment to resolving core issues like Kashmir – not on opportunistic interventions by external powers with vested interests. Any mediation that lacks neutrality or fails to consider the aspirations of the Kashmiri people is doomed to fail. In conclusion, while Trump's offer may have grabbed headlines, it is unlikely to change the geopolitical equation in South Asia. It serves more as a reminder of the U.S.'s strategic priorities than as a credible step toward peace. That said, both India and Pakistan must recognize the danger of further conflict and commit to upholding the ceasefire – not for the sake of global spectators, but for the future of their own people.

China's strategic red line: Unwavering support for Pak

Qamar Bashir



Professor Gao's statements are matched by facts on the ground. Over 60% of Pakistan's current military arsenal originates from China. This includes: JF-17 Thunder fighter jets, co-developed with China, Yuan-class submarines, providing second-strike capabilities, HQ-series air defense systems, complementing Pakistani strategic depth and P-10 and P-15 cruise and ballistic missiles, enhancing Pakistan's tactical reach. Recent reports indicate the arrival of Chinese Y-20 cargo aircraft in Pakistan, allegedly delivering defense equipment and signaling readiness for joint preparedness. This growing military interoperability indicates that the China-Pakistan military alliance...

IN a historic and unambiguous declaration, Professor Victor Gao—close associate and advisor of China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping and Vice President of the Center for China and Globalization (CCG), one of Beijing's most influential think tanks—publicly stated what analysts long assumed but never confirmed: China will always stand with Pakistan, in peace or in war, against any country that threatens its sovereignty and territorial integrity. "China and Pakistan are all-weather ironclad allies. No one should second-guess this alliance between China and Pakistan. China will always come to Pakistan's help and assistance whenever Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity will be threatened by any country."

This was not a diplomatic flourish. Delivered on Indian television in the presence of strategic commentators, Gao's statement was a decisive strategic message, one that carries weight not only because of his current position, but also due to his proximity to China's policymaking elite. His language left no ambiguity: the "any country" referred to could be India, the United States, or any other actor contemplating actions against Pakistan's sovereignty.

Gao's declaration came amidst heightened tensions following the Pahalgam terror attack in India, which killed several civilians. India blamed Pakistan-based elements and responded with missile strikes on Pakistani airbases, including Noor Khan and Murid, according to Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). Pakistan reported no major damage but warned it reserved the right to retaliate "at the time and place of its choosing." China, rather than blindly supporting any narrative, called for a thorough, transparent, and impartial investigation, aligning itself with Pakistan's diplomatic stance. Gao reiterated this position: "We need to call for impartial and complete and thorough investigation into the background of this attack, before any country should seize this opportunity to use this attack as the trigger for escalation of tensions, or even conflict between India and Pakistan." He cautioned against unilateral action based on conjecture or politicized assumptions:

"When you talk about terrorist attacks, you may know inside Pakistan, there have been terrorist attacks against Chinese nationals. We actually

lost quite a few Chinese nationals inside Pakistan. But we always called for a thorough investigation into what exactly is happening behind the scenes—who was pulling the trigger, who was committing all these atrocities." This contrast with India's rapid attribution and response has underlined China's preference for due process over punitive adventurism, but with a red line: Pakistan's sovereignty is non-negotiable.

Professor Gao's statements are matched by facts on the ground. Over 60% of Pakistan's current military arsenal originates from China. This includes: JF-17 Thunder fighter jets, co-developed with China, Yuan-class submarines, providing second-strike capabilities, HQ-series air defense systems, complementing Pakistani strategic depth and P-10 and P-15 cruise and ballistic missiles, enhancing Pakistan's tactical reach. Recent reports indicate the arrival of Chinese Y-20 cargo aircraft in Pakistan, allegedly delivering defense equipment and signaling readiness for joint preparedness. This growing military interoperability indicates that the China-Pakistan military alliance is not theoretical—it is active and deepening. Professor Gao underscored this in the clearest terms: "You are talking about a war between Pakistan and India on the one hand, and then you are talking about an ironclad alliance between China and Pakistan, and China's full commitment to defend Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity." Professor Gao's statements expand China's security perimeter beyond its own borders. By stating that China's alliance with Pakistan would activate against "any country" threatening its integrity, he has laid out a doctrine that potentially covers U.S. operations, Indian offensives, or multilateral actions that challenge Pakistan's territorial claims or strategic interests.

This extension is not purely theoretical. China is already involved in several proxy confrontations—with the United States over Taiwan and trade, with the Philippines over the South China Sea, and now, possibly, with India over Pakistan. It's no surprise, then, that Gao warned of the catastrophic consequences of escalation: "The deterioration of the situation between India and Pakistan is a reason for great concern. These are two big countries, both armed with nuclear weapons... the consequence will be too much

for either India or Pakistan to bear." He warned against viewing such a crisis through a limited lens: "This is the time for both India and Pakistan, and all other stakeholders, to work very closely to get to the bottom of the situation, rather than allowing this attack to be the trigger." Perhaps the most alarming yet underappreciated part of Gao's message came in his remarks about the weaponization of water—a real threat in a region reliant on the Indus basin. India has previously threatened to cut or reduce Pakistan's water access under the Indus Waters Treaty.

Professor Gao minced no words:

"In the context of war, any stopping of a dam or the flow of the water causing drought or loss of life in another country may be considered a war crime. In a non-war context, any such action may be considered a crime against humanity." This was more than a caution. It was a legal and diplomatic shield, warning that Chinese diplomatic and possibly legal mechanisms would be employed to protect Pakistan from such strategic sabotage. India must now revise its strategic calculus. For too long, Indian planners assumed that limited strikes or hybrid warfare against Pakistan could proceed without triggering third-party escalation. But China's position has changed that permanently. The illusion of unilateral maneuvering has been shattered. India now faces the reality of a two-front military, diplomatic, and possibly economic counter-pressure. China's readiness to match rhetoric with resources is clear. Pakistan, fortified by Chinese support, is no longer strategically isolated. India must ask itself: is it prepared for a confrontation not just with Pakistan, but with Pakistan and China acting in concert?

Despite the gravity of the situation, Professor Gao's remarks were also an invitation—to de-escalate: "This is the right time to call on both India and Pakistan to exercise the maximum restraint and seek a peaceful solution." That call must not go unheard. With 1.6 billion people living in the arc of conflict between the Himalayas and the Arabian Sea, the cost of further escalation is not abstract—it is existential. For now, the message from Beijing is unmistakable: China will fight shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan if India dares to turn South Asia into a battleground.

An Eye for an Eye

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



On the Indian side, there has been no official confirmation of the strikes or the retaliatory measures taken by Pakistan. However, Indian media outlets have reported that several areas in Jammu, a city in the Indian-administered Kashmir region, experienced blackouts and heard loud explosions. Residents, indicating ongoing aerial activity

TENSIONS between India and Pakistan have once again spiraled into open military confrontation, with both nuclear-armed neighbors launching air and missile strikes on each other's military installations. What began as a localized skirmish has now escalated into a significant and dangerous exchange of hostilities, raising global alarm over the possibility of a full-scale war between the two rivals. On early Saturday, the Pakistani military reported that India had carried out air-to-surface missile strikes on at least three of its military bases, including a vital air installation near the capital city of Islamabad. In response, Pakistan retaliated with a series of missile attacks targeting Indian military sites, including the Udhampur and Pathankot air bases and a strategic missile storage facility. The fresh wave of aggression follows four days of rising tensions that began on Wednesday, with cross-border shelling and hostile military posturing in the disputed region of Kashmir. The latest attacks signify a dangerous escalation, not only due to their scale and precision but also because they directly target key defense infrastructure on both sides. In Rawalpindi, a major garrison city adjacent to Islamabad, residents reported loud explosions and witnessed a "large fireball" near Noor Khan air base, a key operational facility for the Pakistani Air Force. These reports were corroborated by eye-witnesses who saw streaks of light in the sky and heard the distant roar of explosions, indicating missile activity. Pakistani military spokesman Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry addressed the nation in the televised statement, confirming the strikes and warning India of severe consequences. "Now, you just wait for our response," he said, accusing India of deliberately escalating the situation and endangering regional peace. He characterized India's actions as a push toward a "dangerous war" and declared that Pakistan had launched a retaliatory campaign dubbed "Operation

Bunyan al-Marsus," an Arabic phrase meaning a firm and compact structure—symbolizing resilience and strength in the face of aggression. Pakistan's retaliatory strikes were carried out using short-range surface-to-surface missiles. Military officials in Islamabad confirmed that the operation had successfully hit its intended targets inside Indian territory. Among the high-profile targets was the Pathankot air base, which holds strategic importance due to its proximity to the Pakistan border and its past involvement in Indo-Pakistani conflicts. By targeting a missile storage facility in addition to operational bases, Pakistan has sent a clear signal of its readiness to respond forcefully to Indian provocations.

On the Indian side, there has been no official confirmation of the strikes or the retaliatory measures taken by Pakistan. However, Indian media outlets have reported that several areas in Jammu, a city in the Indian-administered Kashmir region, experienced blackouts and heard loud explosions. Residents, indicating ongoing aerial activity, also reported streaks in the night sky. While Indian authorities have remained largely silent, defense analysts in New Delhi suggest that the government is likely to frame the strikes as a preemptive defensive measure rather than an offensive action. The escalation has drawn concern from international observers and diplomatic missions. The United Nations, along with the governments of the United States, China and Russia, has called for restraint and immediate de-escalation. The possibility of further escalation is particularly worrisome given that both India and Pakistan possess nuclear weapons and have a history of military conflicts, most notably the wars of 1947, 1965, 1971, and the Kargil conflict in 1999. Each time, the disputed Kashmir region has been a central point of contention.

What sets this current conflict apart is the level of precision and strategic intent behind the attacks.

Both sides appear to be targeting each other's military capabilities directly, raising the stakes significantly. Unlike previous cross-border engagements, which often involved limited artillery exchanges and proxy conflicts via militants, this confrontation has moved into a much more dangerous domain involving airstrikes and missile warfare. Furthermore, the rhetoric from both capitals signals an unwillingness to back down. While Pakistan emphasizes the defensive nature of its response under "Operation Bunyan al-Marsus," the phrase "an eye for an eye" used in their official statement indicates a more aggressive stance. On the other hand, India, though officially silent, is expected to present its actions as necessary for national security, especially in the face of what it perceives as repeated provocations from across the border. The people of both nations, particularly those living near the border, are bearing the brunt of this confrontation. Blackouts, fear of bombardment, and displacement have begun affecting civilians, especially in Kashmir and cities close to the Line of Control (LoC). If the escalation continues unchecked, the risk of a wider war with devastating consequences looms large.

The recent military escalation between India and Pakistan represents one of the most severe confrontations between the two nations in recent years. The targeting of military bases and strategic sites indicates a significant shift from low-intensity conflict to high-risk military engagement. With both sides maintaining strong nationalist rhetoric and military posturing, the need for urgent international mediation and de-escalation cannot be overstated. The world watches anxiously as two nuclear-armed powers stand on the brink of a catastrophic conflict. Will diplomacy prevail, or will this confrontation spiral into war? Only time will tell, but the consequences of inaction could be dire.

— University of Okara
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Briefs

Pak indebted to Türkiye for support: PM

FROM PAGE 01
including its decision to honor the recent ceasefire understanding with India. On the bilateral front, Prime Minister Sharif expressed satisfaction with the upward trajectory of Pakistan-Türkiye ties, which have gained momentum following President Erdogan's visit to Islamabad in February and his own visit to Ankara in April. He stressed the importance of promptly implementing decisions taken during high-level engagements and proposed convening the Pakistan-Türkiye Joint Commission at the Foreign Ministers' level at the earliest opportunity. Ambassador Neziroglu conveyed President Erdogan's greetings and congratulations to the Prime Minister and the Pakistani nation on their military and diplomatic success. He praised Pakistan's commitment to peace and affirmed Türkiye's continued support in further strengthening bilateral co-operation in all fields. He noted that institutional engagements between the two nations would be enhanced in the coming months. The meeting reaffirmed the resolve of both countries to further deepen their strategic partnership and work together for regional peace and prosperity.

Pakistan announces completion..

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Furthermore, the Pakistani military has termed the entire period of hostilities from April 22 to May 10 as the "Battle of Truth." This naming, according to official statements, symbolizes Pakistan's defensive posture, moral clarity, and commitment to exposing what it calls "India's destabilizing agenda in the region." The details released by the ISPR highlight the scale and coordination involved in the operation. According to the military, the counter-strikes inflicted significant material damage on Indian military positions while avoiding civilian areas—a reflection of Pakistan's stated intent to avoid unnecessary escalation. The government has lauded the armed forces for their professionalism and preparedness during the operation. Prime Minister and senior defense officials have reiterated Pakistan's preference for peace but emphasized that any threat to national security will be met with firm resistance. The conclusion of Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos marks a pause in the latest round of tensions, though both nations remain on high alert. Regional observers have urged restraint and renewed diplomatic engagement to prevent further escalation. The international community is closely monitoring developments, calling for de-escalation and dialogue.

US and China reach deal to..

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The Geneva meetings were the first face-to-face interactions between senior US and Chinese economic officials since US President Donald Trump returned to power and launched a global tariff blitz, imposing particularly hefty duties on China. Since taking office in January, Trump has hiked the tariffs paid by US importers for goods from China to 145%, in addition to those he imposed on many Chinese goods during his first term and the duties levied by the Biden administration. China hit back by putting export curbs on some rare earth elements, vital for US manufacturers of weapons and electronic consumer goods, and raising tariffs on US goods to 125%. The tariff dispute brought nearly \$600 billion in two-way trade to a standstill, disrupting supply chains, sparking fears of stagflation and triggering some layoffs. Financial markets have been looking out for signs of a thaw in the trade war and Wall Street stock futures climbed and the dollar firmed against safe haven peers on Monday as the talks boosted hopes a global recession might be avoided.

Virat Kohli announces retirement from Test cricket

"Honestly, I never imagined the journey this format would take me on. It's tested me, shaped me, and taught me lessons I'll carry for life. "As I step away from this format, it's not easy -- but it feels right. I've given it everything I had, and it's given me back so much more than I could've hoped for"

NEW DELHI: Batting great Virat Kohli announced his immediate retirement from Test cricket on Monday, just days before India name their squad for a tour to England. Kohli, who scored 9,230 runs in 123 matches at an average of 46.85, posted the decision on Instagram five days after India captain Rohit Sharma called time on his Test career. Since making his debut in 2011, Kohli struck 30 hundreds and 31 fifties with a highest score of 254 not out. "It's been 14 years since I first wore the baggy blue in Test cricket," the 36-year-old Kohli posted on his official feed, which has 271 million followers. "Honestly, I never imagined the journey this format would take me on. It's tested me, shaped me, and taught me lessons I'll carry for life. "As I step away from this format, it's not easy -- but it feels right. I've given it everything I had, and it's given me back so much more than I could've hoped for." An inspirational figure, Kohli was India's most successful Test captains with 40 wins and 17 defeats in 68 matches before stepping down from the role in 2022. The next best are Mahendra Singh Dhoni with 27 wins from 60 and Sourav Ganguly with 21 from 49. "I'm walking away with a heart full of gratitude –



for the game, for the people I shared the field with, and for every single person who made me feel seen along the way. "I'll always look back at my Test career with a smile." Kohli's lack of form in the five-day game may have been behind his decision to call it a day. After averaging close to 55 at his peak between 2011 and 2019, the figure dropped to 32.56 over the past 24 months. Kohli's last Test was in Sydney in January when India lost the match and with it the series 3-1 to Australia. Apart from an unbeaten century in the second innings of the first Test in Perth, Kohli managed just 90 runs from eight innings in the five-Test series. The 36-year-old Kohli was part of the "Fab Four" quartet of batting greats who dominated Test cricket over the past decade, alongside Steve Smith of Australia, Kane Williamson of New Zealand and Joe Root of England. Nicknamed "King Kohli", he was India's batting backbone across three international formats and ended his Twenty20 career with a match-winning innings in his team's World Cup final victory in Barbados last year. Kohli then walked away from the shortest format along with Rohit. – Agencies

Mohammad Abbas dedicates five-wicket haul to Pakistan armed forces

"We want peace and if we are forced into war then our army knows how to respond," he says

DNA

NOTTINGHAM: Pakistan's premier red ball fast bowler Mohammad Abbas dedicated his Nottinghamshire debut performance in the county championship to the Pakistani armed forces who gave a befitting response to Indian aggression. The fast bowler ripped through the opponent Hampshire's batting line up in the first innings with figures of 5 for 31 in 15 overs, playing a pivotal role in bundling out Hampshire for 196 at Trent Bridge. His devastating seam bowling spell handed Nottinghamshire a significant 137-run lead in the ongoing County Championship Division One match. Abbas said, "First of all I want to thank Almighty Allah that I managed to get a five-wicket haul in the first innings of my debut game for Nottinghamshire. I have previous experience of playing at this ground. There is some help for

seamers in the pitch with the new ball, so I am really happy to get a fiver." In a poignant moment which perfectly aligned his successful Nottinghamshire debut with Pakistani forces victory over India, the fast bowler dedicated his stellar performance to the Pakistani military. "I want to dedicate this performance to our brave Pakistani forces

– the army, navy, and air force – who, stationed at the country's borders even at this moment, have been fighting with such valour and bravery against the enemy forces," said Abbas. "We Pakistanis want peace in this world and with our neighbouring countries. But if we are forced into war again and again, then the way our armed forces

have retaliated on this occasion, I am sure they will continue to respond in the same manner in any further misadventures by the Indian forces." The 34-year-old was quick to acknowledge the support of his teammates and the management, including head coach Peter Moores and captain Haseeb Hameed. "Everyone in the team is happy with my performance. Even my pals in the Hampshire team appreciated it, since I've played for them in the past three seasons and I know their strengths and weaknesses. Wherever I play, I try to give my hundred percent." Abbas's return to Nottinghamshire had been long awaited. He initially signed with the club in 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic delayed his debut. After four successful seasons with Hampshire, during which he claimed 180 red-ball wickets, the baller rejoined Nottinghamshire on a six-match deal.

Lahore Qalandars CEO hopes remaining PSL matches to be played in Pakistan
Final decision on Pakistan Super League to be taken by PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi

LAHORE Qalandars CEO Atif Rana expressed optimism that the remaining Pakistan Super League (PSL) matches will be held in Pakistan. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had last week announced the indefinite postponement of the remaining eight matches of the PSL 10 in light of the deteriorating regional security situation. However, after Pakistan and India reached an understanding for a ceasefire, sources told Geo News that the PCB is expected to take a major decision on the remaining matches soon. Speaking on Geo News' programme "Geo Pakistan", Rana said the franchises have unanimously called for the tournament to continue within the country. He noted that packed stadiums would project a positive image of Pakistan to the world, emphasising that the tournament's full return to local grounds would be a significant achievement. "The final call on this matter will be made by the PCB Chairman [Mohsin Naqvi]," Rana clarified, expressing confidence in the leadership's decision. Commenting on his own team's performance, Rana said Lahore Qalandars have one match remaining, and a win would see them through to the playoffs. – DNA

Beijing Hi-tech Expo welcomes expanded international friend circle

This years expo has extensively linked more international scientific and technological resources, fully demonstrating Beijing's exemplary role as an international sci-tech innovation center

BEIJING: "This is the first time for me to experience the feeling of shaking hands with a robot. This is not only a high-level international exhibition, but also a window for us to understand China's high-tech achievements. Without doubts, there are cooperation opportunities everywhere here," a businessman from Ghana said. At the just-ended 27th China Beijing International High-tech Expo, a series of completely independently developed Black tech products have attracted global attention. In 2024, the CHITEC attracted more than 70 international companies from 17 countries and regions. This year, the two numbers has increased to more than 120 as well as 30, with the proportion of international exhibitors accounts for about 15%. Given the vastness of the Chinese market, we have always been interested in entering here, so we hope to get to know it up close. At such an expo, we hope to find partners, investors, and strategic investment consultants to give us advice on online and offline sales channels, Liang, an exhibitor from Singapore introduced. It is a rare opportunity to exhibit at the CHITEC. We could see what other companies have brought and fully communicate with everyone about their technological

products and features, all of which is why we want to be here, Czech exhibitor Germakov emphasized. China is the world's largest producer of electronics and also the largest potential consumer market. Of course, South Korea has also established itself in the world with its expertise in electronics for many years. I hope we can successfully find partners in the electronics field here, and we also welcome cooperation from all suitable customized electronics manufacturers," Park Ju Won, an electronics distributor from South Korea, told China Economic Net (CEN). This years expo has extensively linked more international scientific and technological resources, fully demonstrating Beijing's exemplary role as an international sci-tech innovation center. Fortune 500 companies including AstraZeneca, Sanofi, and Deloitte displayed their latest technologies and cooperation results. Moreover, the Beijing-Saudi Arabia Advanced Manufacturing Conference held at the same time attracted more than 300 bilateral companies to negotiate on site. As of the closing on May 11, a total of 43 projects were signed at the expo with a total amount of over 5.8 billion yuan, attracting more than 80,000 visitors from home and abroad. –DNA

Pacers push Cavs to brink in NBA playoffs, Thunder pull even with Nuggets

LOS ANGELES: The Indiana Pacers thrashed the Cleveland Cavaliers 129-109 to take a 3-1 stranglehold on their NBA playoff series on Sunday as Oklahoma City edged Denver to level their series at two games apiece. Pascal Siakam scored 21 points to lead seven Pacers players in double figures as Indiana pushed Eastern Conference top seeds Cleveland to the brink of elimination in their best-of-seven conference semi-final. There were no such offensive fireworks in Denver, where Oklahoma City squelched the Nuggets' second-half comeback bid to claim a gritty 92-87 victory in a game where both teams struggled to get shots to fall. In Cleveland, the Pacers already had the game well in hand, with an 80-39 halftime lead, when the Cavs announced that star Donovan Mitchell was doubtful to return for the second half with a left ankle injury. Mitchell, coming off back-to-back 40-point games, scored 12 points in the first half, but was clearly hurting when he tested his ankle prior to the start of the second half. His loss would be a body blow for a Cleveland team hoping to fend off elimination when they host game five on Tuesday. Coach Kenny Atkinson said Mitchell would

have an MRI scan on Monday and he had "no idea" if Mitchell would be available for game five. Despite the Pacers' dominance,

there was no shortage of emotion. Indiana reserve Benedict Mathurin was ejected with 4:32 left in the first quarter for



a punch to De'Andre Hunter's chest. Hunter received a technical foul for responding with a two-handed shove that sent Mathurin sprawling, while Indiana's Myles Turner got a technical for wading into the fray. Up 38-23 after one quarter, the Pacers piled it on in the second period, a 17-0 scoring run pushing their lead to 78-37 on the way to an 80-39 halftime lead. Cleveland made just eight baskets in the first half while the Pacers put on an offensive display. A Turner basket at the rim, off a no-look pass from Tyrese Haliburton, sent the Gainbridge Fieldhouse crowd into a frenzy. The Pacers were also on-target from deep, making 12 of their 15 three-pointers in the first half. "This is a group that plays better through adversity," Turner said of the Pacers' rebound from their game-three defeat. "We got punched in the mouth last game, we had a hell of a response. The starters set the tone and the bench picked it up the rest of the game." Turner and Obi Toppin added 20 points each for Indiana and Haliburton finished with 11. Darius Garland led Cleveland's scoring with 21 points, but the Cavaliers gave up 22 turnovers leading to 35 Pacers points. – Agencies

China welcomes ceasefire between...

FROM PAGE 01

he said in response to a question during his regular briefing held here. He said that India and Pakistan are and will always be each other's neighbors. They are both China's neighbors as well. Since the start of the tensions, China has been in close communication with relevant parties and called on the two countries to remain calm, exercise restraints and avoid that escalation, he added. Lin Jian said that on night of May 10, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, had telephone conversations, respectively with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and India's national security advisor Ajit Doval to promote the ease of tensions and realization of a full and lasting ceasefire. Both Pakistan and India made positive remarks on this. China hopes that India and Pakistan will consolidate and continue the ceasefire momentum, avoid further conflict, properly handle differences through dialogue and negotiation and return to the track of political settlement, he added.

Imran Khan asks Junaid to 'step down' as...

FROM PAGE 01

"I will step down from the Public Accounts Committee chairmanship as soon as Imran Khan instructs me to," he stated. Meanwhile, PTT Secretary General Salman Akram Raja declined to comment, saying: "This is an internal party matter, and I do not wish to offer a public position at this time.

110 lost lives in various accidents in Karachi

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: In a troubling revelation, at least 110 people have lost their lives in Karachi over the past 132 days due to collisions involving heavy vehicles, with the latest incident occurring on the Northern Bypass. According to police, a speeding dumper rrammed into a car near the bypass, killing all three occupants on board. The victims were identified as Sulaiman, his son Usama, and their cousin Faraz. The dumper driver fled the scene after the crash, abandoning the vehicle. Family members of the deceased confirmed to the media at Abbasi Shaheed Hospital that all three victims belonged to the same household. They were en route to Gulshan-e-Maymar from the Northern Bypass when the fatal crash took place. Faraz had been married just two months ago, while Sulaiman, a father of four, worked in the transport sector. The grieving family resides in the Band Murad Norani Hotel area of Manghopir. The breakdown of fatalities from heavy vehicle collisions in Karachi is alarming: 42 deaths were caused by trailers, 26 by water tankers, 22 by dumpers, 10 by Mazdas, 10 by buses.

20 Indian airports still remain closed

NEWS DESK

KARACHI: Despite the ceasefire, India has not restored flight operations at its 20 airports, which have been closed for a week so is there a fear of the Pakistan Army in the Indian government or some secret plan is being made. 32 airports have been reopened. Around 300 flights are continuously cancelled and all the aircraft have also been removed from these airports. According to sources, 123 flights operate daily from Amritsar airport in India, near Lahore, but all are cancelled and one Cessna aircraft is available there. 65 daily flights are cancelled from Srinagar airport, which has been closed for six days, and there is no aircraft. Thirty daily flights have been cancelled from Ladakh's Leh Kausik airport; 30 flights from occupied Jammu have been cancelled and all aircraft have been grounded.

Briefs

Gold prices decrease Rs 10,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.10,400 on Monday and was sold at Rs.340,500 against its sale at Rs.350,900 on the previous trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs.8,917 to Rs.291,923 from Rs.300,840 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat decreased by Rs.8,087 to Rs.267,693 from Rs.275,780. The rates of per tola silver declined by Rs.17 to Rs.3,400 and ten gram silver dipped by Rs.15 to Rs.2,914 respectively. The price of gold in the international market also decreased by \$104 to \$3,221 from \$3,325 whereas that of silver also declined by \$0.17 to \$32.18, the Association reported.—APP

Rupee gains 14 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 14 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 281.56 against the previous day's closing of Rs 281.70. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 282.00 and Rs 283.50, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs4.19 to close at Rs 312.86 against the last day's closing of Rs 317.05, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 04 paisa and closed at Rs 1.90, whereas a decrease of Rs2.59 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 371.07 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 373.66. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 04 paisa each to close at Rs 76.65 and Rs 75.06, respectively.—APP

Syria leader to miss Arab summit in Iraq: Source

BAGHDAD: Syria's interim president, Ahmed Al-Sharaa, will not attend an upcoming Arab League summit in Baghdad, an Arab diplomatic source said Monday, as powerful Iraqi politicians have rejected hosting a former jihadist leader. Sharaa, whose Islamist group spearheaded the offensive that toppled Syria's longtime ruler Bashar Assad in December, was imprisoned for years in Iraq on charges of belonging to Al-Qaeda following the 2003 US-led invasion. The Iraqi government has invited Sharaa for the meeting planned for Saturday, but he "will not attend the Arab Summit," the diplomatic source told AFP on condition of anonymity. Instead, Foreign Minister Asaad Al-Shaibani will lead the Syrian delegation. Several powerful Iraqi politicians have voiced opposition to Sharaa's planned visit to Iraq. They include former prime minister Nuri Al-Maliki, a leading member of Iraq's main pro-Iran coalition that holds a parliamentary majority. Armed groups aligned with Tehran have also joined the call against Sharaa, including the powerful faction Kataeb Hezbollah which has previously fought in Syria alongside Assad's forces. Several Iraqi security sources told AFP that an old arrest warrant for Sharaa from his time as a member of Al-Qaeda remains in place. However, authorities seek good relations with Syria's new leadership to help maintain regional stability, the sources said. The fall of Assad, who was a close ally of the government in Baghdad, has complicated relations between the neighboring countries. Iraq, where the majority are Shiite Muslims, remains deeply scarred by decades of conflict following the US-led invasion, which triggered sectarian violence and the rise of Sunni jihadist groups including Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.—APP

FM briefs global investors on Pak's eco developments

Senator Aurangzeb highlighted the recent upgrade in Pakistan's sovereign rating by Fitch, terming it a positive external validation of the country's improving macroeconomic trajectory

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a virtual meeting here on Monday with Ms. Johana Chua, Head of Emerging Markets Economics, Citigroup Global Markets, along with a host of representatives from the investment community. During the meeting, the Minister shared key updates on Pakistan's recent economic developments. He briefed the participants on his recent visit to the United Kingdom and engagements with bilateral partners, which he described as constructive and encouraging for Pakistan's economic outlook. Senator Aurangzeb highlighted the recent upgrade in Pakistan's sovereign rating by Fitch, terming it a positive external validation of the country's improving macroeconomic trajectory. He underscored that "staying the course" remains the guiding message and national commitment, reflecting the government's resolve for continuity in reforms and fiscal discipline. The Minister also apprised the participants of the successful conclusion of a Staff Level Agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), with the next tranche expected to



be received tomorrow. He further mentioned the approval of the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), calling it a milestone achievement for Pakistan. Focusing on growth priorities, the Minister emphasized Pakistan's shift toward an export-led growth model, noting a significant surge in IT services exports, which have reached USD 3.2 billion this year. The

discussion also covered ongoing tax reforms, including legislative progress on Agricultural Income Tax and the revival of the National Tax Council. Senator Aurangzeb stressed that while the formal sector and salaried class are already contributing to the national revenue, it is imperative to expand the tax net and enhance enforcement in sec-

tors where tax leakages persist. Ms. Johana Chua and her team appreciated the recent macroeconomic developments and reform measures undertaken by the Government of Pakistan. She welcomed the progress on the IMF programme and the commitment to fiscal consolidation, export growth, and tax reforms. Ms. Chua

reaffirmed Citigroup's interest in continued engagement with Pakistan and expressed support for the country's reform trajectory and international re-engagement. The meeting concluded with both sides agreeing to maintain regular communication and explore avenues for future collaboration.

Ahsan chairs meeting on affordable housing finance schemes

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday chaired a meeting on affordable housing finance schemes, aimed at addressing the critical challenges, faced in long-term housing finance and exploring viable policy models for low-cost housing in the country. The meeting was attended by Planning Secretary Awais Manzoor Sumra, Vice Chancellor of PIDE Nadeem Javed, Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, CEOs of private banks, and representatives from PMRC and National Bank of Pakistan, a news release said. The participants reviewed international best practices and mortgage models from countries including Singapore, South Africa, Turkey, Bangladesh, Brazil and India. Discussions focused on designing a practical and sustainable housing finance framework tailored to Pakistan's socio-economic landscape. Ahsan Iqbal emphasized that the unavailability of long-term housing finance remained one of the country's most significant barriers to affordable housing. He recalled substantial progress made in 2017-18, which was unfortunately disrupted by political instability. "When policy continuity is lacking, the public bears the cost," he noted. Highlighting the success of auto-leasing models in the private sector, the minister questioned why a similar model could not be implemented for housing. "Millions of people live their entire lives in rented homes. owning a house should not be a distant dream for the salaried class," he said, adding that "a home amounting to Rs 20 million to Rs 30 million cannot be built through lump-sum payments by an average income earner." Ahsan Iqbal advocated for a housing finance framework similar to auto-leasing, backed by mortgages and supported by government policy. He stressed the government's responsibility to facilitate this through guarantees and regulatory support, announcing "The government is ready to offer 100% guarantees to banks to ensure the security of their capital." The Planning Ministry's proposed financial framework was presented by Member Infrastructure Waqas Anwar. It was acknowledged that the Punjab government is also launching its own housing roll-out program. In order to streamline legal and regulatory aspects, the Planning Ministry would engage with the Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar. The minister called on private banks to adopt a market-based housing finance model without fear, assuring full government support. "Creating an easy housing finance framework is not rocket science. Successful models exist worldwide, and we must adapt them to our context," he said. He also proposed targeted government subsidies for smaller housing units like three-marla homes, while allowing banks to independently design frameworks for larger units (ten Marla and above). "This initiative can trigger a transformative shift in Pakistan's housing sector, while significantly contributing to economic growth, infrastructure development, and social uplift," Ahsan Iqbal said. During the meeting, CEOs of private banks responded positively to the proposals, expressing willingness to collaborate in designing a practical financing framework for affordable housing.—DNA

UK govt toughens immigration plans as hard-right gains

LONDON: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer vowed Monday to "finally take back control" of Britain's borders as his government unveiled policies designed to reduce legal immigration and fend off rising support for the hard right. Labour leader Starmer announced he was ending an "experiment in open borders" that saw net migration rise to nearly one million people under the previous Conservative government, which lost last year's general election. The government's Immigration White Paper policy document includes plans to cut overseas care workers and increase from five to 10 years the length of time people will have to live in UK before qualifying for settlement and citizenship. English language rules will also be strengthened, with all adult dependents required to demonstrate a basic understanding, while the length of time students can stay in the UK after completing their studies will be reduced. Starmer said the policies would "finally take back control of our borders," recalling the pro-Brexit slogan used at the height of the campaign to leave the European Union in 2016. Labour vowed in its general election manifesto last year to significantly reduce net migration, which stood at 728,000 in the 12 months to last June. It had peaked at 906,000 in 2023 after averaging 200,000 for most of the 2010s. Starmer, a former human rights lawyer who voted for the UK to remain part of the EU, is under renewed pressure to tackle immigration following the anti-immigration Reform party's gains in recent local elections. Arch-Euroskeptic Nigel Farage's party won more than 670 local council seats as well as its first two mayoral posts. It is also riding high in national polls, while Labour is struggling. However, Starmer's tack to the right on immigration risks alienating Labour's large base of liberal supporters, with the Liberal Democrats and the Greens picking up votes on the left.—DNA

Chinese experts assist Myanmar quake survivors with vital public health aid

MANDALAY: Sitting outside a tent donated by China, 35-year-old Nyo Nyo Lwin said the China Public Health Team came and provided vaccines, added water disinfectants to the domestic water pots, and checked if the food preparation was safe. "I'm very grateful to them," Nyo Nyo Lwin said. "My husband and I still can't return to work. The stone carving business he had worked was hit hard by the quake." Their family now lives with two elderly relatives, both over 80 years old. "We only rely on donations now, including tents, mats, mosquito nets, blankets, solar lights, water and even food. This is the worst earthquake I've ever experienced," she said. Like Nyo Nyo Lwin, thousands of families across Mandalay, Myanmar, are struggling to rebuild their lives amid the threat of diseases. Since April 20, China's 50-member public health team has been working around the clock in the region to prevent outbreaks in the aftermath of the devastating 7.9-magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar on March 28. The team has set up temporary labs, testing water, distributing supplies, and offering vaccination guidance. They've been active for over 20 consecutive days and plan to stay a few more, according to the team. "We were living on the fourth floor," said 78-year-old U Aung Lwin, another earthquake survivor. "When the shaking started, I tried to stand but fell and hit my head on the bed. I got injured." "The Red Cross Society of China came and disinfected our area. Donors gave us what we needed here," his wife Daw Aye added. "I'm grateful to the donors." Ko Kyaw Lwin, 55, and three of his family members are sheltering in a China-donated tent. "Our apartment is unsafe now. Chinese doctors came, treated the water, and advised us to visit the health center for vaccination," he said. "We've never seen an earthquake like this. The donations helped when we needed them the most. But we're worried about where we can go after we leave the shelter. Can we send our kids back to school?" Official data showed that the earthquake has killed around 3,800 people, injured more than 5,100, and left approximately 100 missing as of May 9. Chen Lei, head of the China Public Health Team to Myanmar and deputy director of the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration's emergency response department, said this mission is part of China's emergency humanitarian relief assistance to Myanmar. "Our team is an important manifestation of the health cooperation between the two countries," said Chen. "By directly participating in on-site health and epidemic prevention work, we have conveyed China's mature post-disaster health and epidemic prevention experience and practices to Myanmar, provided post-disaster epidemic prevention technical solutions on time, and effectively carried out technical training including laboratory testing, environmental disinfection, and post-disaster epidemic prevention, which helped improve Myanmar's ability to respond to public health emergencies and build a solid line of defense for regional public health security," Zhao Shiwen, deputy director of the Yunnan Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said Zhang Bike, deputy director of the Institute of Infectious Disease Control and Prevention at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said the team has conducted three rounds of visits to key disaster sites in Mandalay.—DNA

Report on family-friendly workplace policies released

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Business Council (PBC), UNICEF, and UN Women jointly launched a landmark report, "Mapping Family-Friendly Workplace Policies in Pakistan," underscoring the critical role of family-friendly policies in supporting the social sector, businesses, employees, and Pakistan's broader economic growth. The report offers valuable insights into how progressive workplace measures—such as parental leave, flexible working arrangements, and childcare support—can enhance employee well-being, child de-

velopment, promote gender equality, and contribute to sustainable economic development. In his remarks, Ehsan Malik, CEO of PBC, emphasized: "For the private sector, family-friendly policies have evolved beyond compliance or corporate goodwill—they are now essential for cultivating a modern, resilient, and high-performing workforce. Businesses that invest in supporting working parents benefit from stronger talent retention, lower absenteeism, and greater gender diversity. This report acts as a practical resource, presenting a variety of adaptable models for companies to tailor to their specific needs. It

offers a starting point—or a next step—for organizations aiming to create more inclusive, supportive, and future-ready workplaces." "Family-friendly policies are key to unlocking children's potential, empowering women, and driving economic growth in Pakistan," said Abdullah Fadil, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan. "With only one in five women in the workforce, flexible work arrangements, access to affordable, quality childcare, and support for working mothers are essential. These policies foster early childhood development that shapes a child's entire future and contributes towards a more inclusive, productive

Pakistan." Jamshed Kazi, Country Representative, UN Women Pakistan, highlighted: "When workplaces adopt family-friendly policies, they not only support parents—they help build a more gender-diverse and inclusive workforce. These policies challenge traditional gender roles, promote shared caregiving responsibilities, and contribute to shifting social norms both in households and at work. By enabling all caregivers—women and men alike—to thrive professionally while nurturing their families, we lay the foundation for stronger communities and a more equitable, prosperous future for Pakistan." In her key-

note speech Ms. Shaheena Sher Ali, Minister for Women Development, Government of Sindh said, "An ideal workplace is one where both women and men are provided with equal opportunities, safety, and professional growth. We envision an environment where women are empowered to excel according to their talents, and men stand beside them as supportive and respectful colleagues. Together, women and men build stronger institutions, economic stability, and a more inclusive society. Mutual respect, collaboration, and equality at the workplace are the pillars that lead us toward a brighter and more developed Pakistan."

Bangladesh investigators say ousted PM behind deadly crackdown

DHAKA: Bangladesh's former prime minister Sheikh Hasina masterminded a deadly crackdown on mass protests that prompted her ouster last year, prosecutors at a domestic war crimes tribunal said Monday. Up to 1,400 people died in July 2024 when Hasina's government launched a brutal campaign to silence the opposition, according to the United Nations. Hasina lives in self-imposed exile in India, where she fled by helicopter, and has defied an arrest warrant from Dhaka over charges of crimes against humanity. "The investigation team has found Sheikh Hasina culpable in at least five charges," Mohammad Tajul Islam, chief prosecutor at Bangladesh's domestic International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), told reporters. "They have brought charges of abetment, incitement, complicity, facilitation, conspiracy, and failure to prevent mass murder during the July uprising.—APP

Hundreds march in West Bank against killings of Palestinian medics

RAMALLAH: Hundreds of Palestinian Red Crescent staff marched in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah on Monday to protest the killing of medical workers in Gaza over the past 19 months of war. Gathering in the city's Clock Square, medical personnel, support staff and volunteers wore white and orange vests and waved flags bearing the Red Crescent's emblem. The demonstration marked World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, usually observed on May 8, and called for the "protection for medical and humanitarian workers." In a statement released Monday, the Red Crescent said 48 of their staff members have been killed in Gaza and the West Bank since the war began on October 7, 2023—including 30 who "were killed while performing their humanitarian duty wearing the Red Crescent emblem." Protesters carried symbolic white shrouds bearing the names and pictures of the dead, as well as signs demanding the release of three staff members who have been detained by the Israeli army for over a year. Some 1,400 humanitarian and medical workers have been killed in Gaza since the beginning of the war, according to the statement, which added that "dozens of medical personnel working in Gaza... were detained while performing their humanitarian duties.—APP

Poland to close Russian consulate in Krakow over 'sabotage'

WARSAW: Poland's top diplomat said Monday that he ordered the closure of a Russian consulate over "sabotage" after authorities accused Russia of orchestrating a fire that destroyed a Warsaw shopping centre last year. Since Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Kyiv-ally Poland has claimed to be the target of sabotage attempts the authorities blame on Russia. Russia immediately vowed an "adequate response" to Poland over the closure of the Krakow consulate. "Due to evidence that it was the Russian secret services that carried out the reprehensible act of sabotage against the Marywilka shopping centre, I have decided to withdraw my authorisation for the activity of the Russian consulate in Krakow," said Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski. Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said "Warsaw continues to deliberately undermine relations, acting against the interests of its citizens." "An adequate response to these inadequate steps will follow shortly," she told the RIA Novosti state news agency. In May 2024, a fire completely destroyed a large shopping centre in Warsaw and the 1,400 businesses it housed, most of them owned by members of the Vietnamese community.—APP

Briefs

Kurdish PKK disbands and ends insurgency

PKK decision set to have far-reaching political and security consequences for region

DNA

ANKARA: The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group, which has been in conflict with the Turkish state for more than four decades, has decided to dissolve itself and end its armed struggle, a news agency close to the group reported on Monday. The PKK decision is set to have far-reaching political and security consequences for the region, including in neighbouring Syria where Kurdish forces are allied with US forces. The Firat news agency published what it said was the closing declaration of a congress that the PKK held last week in northern Iraq, in response to a call in February from its jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan to disband. "The 12th PKK Congress has decided to dissolve the PKK's organisational structure and end its method of armed struggle," the group announced in a statement after holding its congress last week. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan's office and the foreign ministry did not immediately comment on the announcement. More than 40,000 people have been killed in the conflict since the PKK launched its insurgency in 1984. It is designated a terrorist group by Turkey and its Western allies.

Opposition in India seeks answers from Modi govt

Shiv Sena leader demands all-party conference, says that Modi no longer has the right to remain in power

DNA

KARACHI: India's opposition leaders have reacted strongly to US President Donald Trump's announcement of a truce between India and Pakistan, raising concerns about the Indian government's diplomatic approach, strategy, and the role of a foreign leader in drawing the curtain on the conflict. Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the Indian National Congress and the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, spearheaded the campaign by demanding an urgent special session of the parliament. The News reported. Gandhi, in his letter to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, mentioned the Trump-announced truce, Operation Sindoor, and the recent Pahalgam terror incident as issues that require immediate action. Highlighting the importance of accountability and legislative debate, Gandhi said: "This will also be an opportunity to demonstrate our collective resolve to meet the challenges ahead."

DPM Dar, Saudi envoy reaffirm resolve to further strengthen ties

During the meeting, they discussed full gamut of bilateral ties and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen already existing fraternal relations across all sectors



ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malki, called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday in Islamabad. The meeting, held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focused on matters of mutual interest, with both sides expressing their resolve to deepen the historic and strategic partnership between

Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to a press release issued by the Foreign Office Spokesperson, the two dignitaries discussed the full spectrum of bilateral relations, encompassing political, economic, defense, energy, and cultural cooperation. Both leaders reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthen the already robust fraternal ties that exist be-

tween the two brotherly countries.

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar expressed gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its consistent support to Pakistan, particularly in times of economic difficulty and regional challenges. He emphasized that the people of Pakistan hold Saudi Arabia in high regard for its unwavering friendship, support for the Pakistani dias-

pora, and the generous assistance extended in multiple sectors including energy, development, and humanitarian aid. Ambassador Al-Malki conveyed the greetings of the Saudi leadership to the people and government of Pakistan, reiterating Riyadh's keen interest in enhancing bilateral collaboration. He also appreciated Pakistan's continued support for the Kingdom on international platforms and lauded the contributions of Pakistani workers in the development of Saudi Arabia. The two sides discussed recent high-level exchanges and underscored the importance of maintaining momentum in political consultations and joint economic ventures. In particular, they explored ways to further enhance cooperation in trade and investment, including the prospects of major Saudi investments in Pakistan's energy and infrastructure sectors under the framework of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). Both officials also exchanged views on regional and international developments, with an emphasis on shared security concerns and stability in the Muslim world. They agreed on the importance of unity among Islamic countries to address common challenges. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both leaders agreeing to maintain regular contacts and to expedite follow-up actions on decisions taken during previous bilateral engagements. The warm and cordial atmosphere of the meeting reflected the deep-rooted and time-tested brotherly ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

US stopped 'nuclear conflict' between Pak, India

"Trade is a big reason why they stopped fighting," says US president during an event at White House

DNA

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said on Monday that US intervention prevented a "bad nuclear war" between Pakistan and India, after the South Asian rivals agreed a ceasefire following a series of clashes. "We stopped a nuclear conflict. I think it could have been a bad nuclear war, millions of people could have been killed. So I'm very proud of that," Trump told reporters at the White House. Trump also said the United States is ready to help Pakistan and India in the wake of a ceasefire agreement that he says his administration helped broker. Trade is a big reason why they stopped fighting, he said at an event at the White House.

Government proposes up to 10% tax cut for salaried class

The proposed reduction in tax rates might bring relief up to Rs50 billion for them in the next budget

MONITORING REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The government has shared some headlines of the proposed taxation measures with the IMF for the upcoming budget for 2025-26, including a reduction in the tax burden of salaried class up to 10% in different income slabs. The proposed reduction in tax rates, if agreed by the IMF in different income slabs of the salaried class, might bring relief up to Rs50 billion for them in the next budget. The IMF team and the Pakistani side will kick-start parleys on finalising the upcoming budget for 2025-26 this week from May 14 to 22. However, the venue of the meeting is yet to be finalised. "To kick-start the economy, the government has shown its willingness to take additional taxation measures to match the revenue losses that will be incurred for providing the relief measures in the upcoming budget," top official sources confirmed. "The IMF team will discuss these proposed measures in the upcoming parleys," the source added. The Pakistani team, the sources said, wants negotiations only to fill the gap that will occur on account of the provision of some relief. For instance, in the case of the salaried class, the FBR has proposed a reduction in tax rates of Rs50 billion, so this gap will be filled with some other taxation measures. In the first ten months (July-April) period, the salaried class paid out more than Rs450 billion in taxes, which is much higher than retailers and exporters.

Trump defends prospect of Qatar gifting him luxury plane

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said Sunday night that the Defence Department plans to accept from the Qatari royal family a luxury Boeing 747-8 jet to replace Air Force One, the air transport for the US president, as a "GIFT, FREE OF CHARGE." In a post on Truth Social, Trump said the multimillion dollar jet would be used on a temporary basis "in a very public and transparent transaction." Earlier, The New York Times and ABC News reported that the plane will later be donated to Trump's presidential library. The gift will be announced when Trump makes his first major foreign trip to the Middle East this week, where he will visit Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, according to the Associated Press and the Times. Indicating his plans to accept the plane as a gift, President Trump lashed out at Democratic critics of the exchange in an evening post on Truth Social on May 11. "So the fact that the Defense Department is getting a GIFT, FREE OF CHARGE, of a 747 aircraft to replace the 40 year old Air Force One, temporarily, in a very public and transparent transaction, so bothers the Crooked Democrats that they insist we pay, TOP DOLLAR, for the plane. Anybody can do that!" Trump said. "The Dems (Democrats) are World Class Losers!!!" The US Constitution's Emoluments Clause prohibits any person holding office from accepting "any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State," without congressional consent. The aircraft in question is worth \$400 million, ABC reported. - Agencies



Army Chief General Asim visits injured soldiers

During the visit, the COAS individually met the injured personnel, lauded their exceptional bravery and steadfast devotion to duty, and reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of the Pakistan Armed Forces to their continued care, rehabilitation, and welfare

DNA

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visited Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Rawalpindi to inquire after the well-being of soldiers and innocent civilians wounded during Marka e Haq / Operation Bunyanum Marsoos. During the visit, the COAS individually met the injured personnel, lauded their exceptional bravery and steadfast devotion to duty, and reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of the Pakistan Armed Forces to their continued care, rehabilitation, and welfare. "Our civilians' & soldiers' valour and sacrifice form the cornerstone of Pakistan's security. The entire nation stands in resolute solidarity with every member of its Armed Forces," the COAS stated. COAS underscored that no hostile design can erode the determination of the Armed Forces of Pakistan. He noted that



the resolute and unified response exhibited during Marka e Haq / Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, in concert with the steadfast support of the Pakistani people, constitutes a defining chapter in the country's military history.

PSX skyrockets nearly 10,000 points as ceasefire lifts investor confidence

Market hits 117,104.11 points – the highest day-on-day increase in points on an intra-day basis

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) opened to a sharp rally on Monday after tensions between Pakistan and India eased, with the benchmark KSE-100 index jumping more than 9%. The benchmark KSE-100 index surged to 117,104.11 points after a surge of 9,928 points during intra-day trade – the highest day-on-day increase in points on an intra-day basis – up from the previous close of 107,174.63 points. The positive momentum was driven by two major developments:

the ceasefire agreement between Pakistan and India, and IMF approval of a critical loan tranche over the weekend. Market participants responded with strong buying activity amid improved geopolitical and economic outlooks. Following the rapid surge, trading on the exchange was suspended for an hour – a circuit breaker to control excessive volatility – but has now resumed. In a note, Arif Habib Limited noted that the most significant catalyst is the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan – a major diplomatic achievement that sharply lowers geopolitical risk in the region. The announcement comes after weeks of tension following the Pahalgam attack, which had triggered aggressive selloffs and fueled widespread investor concerns. Adding further momentum is US President Donald Trump's recent statement pledging support for resolving the Kashmir issue and encouraging enhanced trade relations between India and Pakistan.

Romania's far-right candidate clear favourite in presidential run-off

Simion – a big fan of US President Donald Trump – did better than expected in the first round, taking 40.9 percent of the vote on May 4. The 38-year-old is slated to take about 55 percent in Sunday's vote, according to the only poll published so far



BUCHAREST: After triumphing in the first round of the presidential election, Romania's far-right candidate George Simion is tipped to win this weekend's run-off unless his pro-European rival can mobilise the masses who abstained last time. Simion – a big fan of US President Donald Trump – did better than expected in the first round, taking 40.9 percent of the vote on May 4. The 38-year-old is slated to take about 55 percent

in Sunday's vote, according to the only poll published so far. Trailing far behind is the centrist mayor of Bucharest Nicusor Dan. Dan, 55, hopes undecided voters will turn out for him in a bid to prevent a nationalist shift under the eurosceptic Simion, who opposes sending aid to neighbouring Ukraine. The ballot will be closely watched internationally following the rare annulment of the vote held in November in the European Union country of 19 million people, which is a key NATO member. "Simion is clearly the favourite," Remus Stefureac, director of the polling company INSCOP Research, told AFP. He secured "twice as many votes as his rival in the first round" due in part to his popularity among expatriate voters, he said. Simion is also likely to benefit from Dan not having the explicit backing of the pro-European camp, which had supported another candidate. - Agencies

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