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Hungary and Pakistan A growing friendship, says Ambassador

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Sirbaz Khan scales all 8,000m peaks

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In Brotherhood and Gratitude

Ishaq Dar heads to China with a message of unity and resolve

During his visit, Mr. Dar will convey the deep gratitude of the Government of Pakistan to the Chinese leadership for their unwavering support, particularly during times of regional tensions, including Pakistan's enduring struggle against Indian aggression

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar is set to embark on a significant visit to China today, aiming to further strengthen Pakistan's strategic and diplomatic ties with its all-weather friend. The visit holds special importance in the backdrop of regional developments and growing global realignments. During his visit, Mr. Dar will convey the deep gratitude of the Government of Pakistan to the Chinese leadership for their unwavering support, particularly during times of regional tensions, including Pakistan's enduring struggle against Indian aggression. China's steadfast stance as a regional ally has always added weight to Pakistan's diplomatic position on key issues, and this visit is expected to reaffirm mutual trust and strategic understanding. One of the key objectives of Mr. Dar's visit will be to explore new avenues of cooperation between the two countries. From economic collaboration under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to enhanced cooperation in trade, investment, agriculture, science, and technology, the Pakistani leadership is keen to broaden the scope of bilateral ties beyond traditional sectors. Furthermore, Ishaq Dar will deliver a special message from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the top Chinese leadership. This high-level communication underscores the importance Pakistan places on its partnership with China, which remains central to Islamabad's foreign policy. The visit is also expected to lay the groundwork for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's forthcoming visit to China, which will further deepen political, economic, and

Pakistan, China, Afghanistan FM's to hold trilateral talks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar will depart for China tomorrow, where he is expected to hold bilateral talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, according to sources. Meanwhile, Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi is set to arrive in China on May 20 to join the trilateral meeting. The foreign ministers of the three countries are expected to discuss the promotion of regional trade, enhanced security cooperation, and the evolving situation in the region, particularly in the wake of the recent Pakistan-India conflict.

people-to-people ties between the two nations. Pakistan and China have long enjoyed a unique and resilient partnership, characterized by mutual respect and shared strategic interests. With the evolving geopolitical landscape, Mr. Dar's visit is a timely opportunity to further solidify this bond and ensure both countries remain aligned on key regional and global issues.

Attaullah Tara says

Pakistan aims for economic glory after military victory

He recalled Pakistan's six nuclear tests on May 28, 1998, under Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif

ABID RAZA



LAHORE, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tara credited the Pakistan armed forces for their bravery in a historic military victory over India and urged the nation to now focus on defeating the enemy on the economic front through collective efforts. Speaking at a large public gathering in his electoral constituency on Sunday, Tara congratulated the people of Pakistan, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff General Hafiz Syed Asim Munir, and the armed forces for their triumph. He paid tribute to the Army, Air Force, and Navy, emphasizing their globally recognized valor. He recounted that following India's cowardly attack. "Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif authorized a decisive military response, resulting in a humiliating defeat for

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Relief to be provided to common men

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Financial team of the federal government led by Advisor to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah met with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori and MQM-Pakistan's leadership here at Governor House on Sunday and discussed proposed measures to provide relief to common men in the upcoming federal budget. Government team comprising of Federal Minister for Finance Aurangzeb, Awais Leghari and others also held meetings with business community to get proposals for the budget 2025-26. Rana Sanaullah earlier met

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Bomb kills one near California fertility clinic

"It has been identified as a bomb that was either in or near the car," says DeHarte

DNA

CALIFORNIA: A bomb exploded near a reproductive health facility in Palm Springs, California, on Saturday, killing one person and injuring at least four in an incident the FBI called an "intentional act of terrorism". The authorities have a person of interest in the investigation and are not searching for a suspect, Akil Davis, assistant director of the FBI's Los Angeles field office, told reporters. He provided no further details. The person killed was near a vehicle that had been blown to pieces outside the clinic, operated by American Reproductive Centres, Davis said. The bomb, which detonated before 11am (2pm EDT/1800GMT), was either in or near a car parked outside the clinic when it exploded, said Mayor Ron deHarte of Palm Springs, about 100 miles (160km) east of Los Angeles. "Make no mistake, this is an intentional act of terrorism," Davis said, adding the FBI would determine if it was an act of "international terrorism or a domestic terrorism."

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At least four killed in Qila Abdullah

20 people sustained wounds and shifted to different hospitals, says DC Riaz Ahmed

DNA

QUETTA: At least four people were killed and several others injured in an explosion near FC fort in Balochistan's Qila Abdullah. The explosion occurred near Jabbar Market, adjacent to the back wall of the FC fort, in the Balochistan's district. Deputy Commissioner Riaz Khan said that at least 20 persons were wounded in the explosion and shifted to different hospitals. Detailing the incident, Khan said that several vehicles and shops were destroyed in the powerful blast as terrorists apparently wanted to target the wall of FC fort. Armed men and FC soldiers also exchanged fire following the bomb blast. According to the government official, some

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VATICAN CITY: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani meets new Pope Leo XIV during his visit to the Vatican City. – DNA

India acted recklessly

DG ISPR warns India of long-term consequences

Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry also condemns India's behaviour as acting unilaterally as "judge, jury and executioner"

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, in an interview with a foreign television channel, has said that Pakistan is not a violent nation but a responsible and serious one, with peace as its foremost priority. Addressing the ongoing regional tensions, the top military spokesperson said that the roots of the current standoff lie in India's consistent policy of sponsoring and abetting terrorism, particularly within Pakistan. He added that instead of acknowledging Islamabad's role and working towards a resolution, New Delhi was hiding behind a false narrative of blaming Pakistan for acts of terrorism. Referring specifically to the Pahalgam incident, the DG ISPR criticised India's response, questioning how fingers were pointed at Pakistan within minutes of the attack. "Within 10 minutes, the first investigation report is registered in which it is established that the attackers came from across the border." Lt Gen Chaudhry also said that when India's Foreign Ministry

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Pakistan to 'keep airspace closed' for India

Highly placed sources say the decision to be announced in due process as no improvement in situation witnessed

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: After tensions flared following last month's Pahalgam false flag operation by India, which resulted in the deaths of 26 tourists, India unilaterally closed its airspace for Pakistan on April 23 for a month. Pakistan retaliated in kind the next day. India is suffering greatly as a result of the airspace limitations. A Notice to Airmen (Notam) will be issued by the Aviation Division before the end of the present term. Highly placed sources told The News here on Saturday that the decision would be announced in due process as no improvement has

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Hungary and Pakistan: a growing friendship (P-II)

An Interview with H.E. Béla Fazekas, Ambassador of Hungary to Pakistan

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: As his tenure in Pakistan comes to a close, the Hungarian Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Béla Fazekas, reflects on the evolving bilateral relationship between Hungary and Pakistan. In a candid and thoughtful interview, Ambassador Fazekas offers insight into the diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties that have developed over the years—and outlines opportunities for a brighter, more connected future between the two nations. First of this interview was published in this newspaper on May 12, 2025. When asked to assess the current state of political, economic, and cultural relations between Hungary and Pakistan, Ambassador Fazekas described the relationship as being "more than friendly and less than strategic." However, he emphasized that the two nations are just a "stone's throw away" from forging a truly strategic partnership. "Over the past five years, we've covered significant ground," he noted, underscoring the importance of consistent diplomatic engagement. "Economic and trade

relations, however, tell a different story." The ambassador highlighted one of the most remarkable economic success stories: the long-standing presence of Hungarian oil and gas giant MOL in Pakistan. Since 1999, MOL has been active in the country's energy sector, investing over USD 3 billion and contributing immensely to Pakistan's energy security—particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Despite security challenges in that region, MOL has remained committed, even as many other Western companies exited. "This unwavering engagement speaks volumes about MOL's confidence in Pakistan and its people," said Fazekas. On the flip side, the broader picture of bilateral trade leaves room for improvement. Though the trade volume has doubled in five years—from USD 50 million to USD 100 million—Ambassador Fazekas pointed out that this still does not reflect the true potential of the relationship. Referencing the past "Nokia era," when Hungarian-made cellphones were ubiquitous in Pakistani households, he said, "Those days might not return, but we must find a substitute—another flagship product to revive the vibrancy of our trade relations." Ambassador Fazekas is particularly proud of Hungary's



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Hungary Béla Fazekas talks to Daily Islamabad POST.

contributions to education in Pakistan. Despite being a relatively small nation in terms of geopolitical power, Hungary boasts one of the highest numbers of Nobel Prize winners per capita—a feat he attributes to its world-class higher education system. In the last decade, Hungary has steadily increased the number of govern-

ment-funded scholarships for Pakistani students, beginning with 80 and now offering 400 scholarships annually. The demand is overwhelming, with 15,000 to 18,000 applicants every year, demonstrating the high regard in which Hungarian education is held among Pakistani youth. Additionally, hundreds of Pakistani students pursue self-funded studies in Hungary, making them one of the largest Pakistani student diasporas in Europe—and the largest under any single government's scholarship program. "These young people are ambassadors of Pakistan in Hungary," said Fazekas, emphasizing the role of education in building long-lasting people-to-people connections. On how Pakistan can enhance its presence in Hungary, Ambassador Fazekas offered pragmatic advice. "Establish a commercial counselor's post at the embassy—or better yet, open a dedicated trade office in Budapest," he recommended. He also emphasized the need to leverage the presence of Pakistani students to deepen cultural understanding. "They can organize cultural events, culinary festivals, even introduce cricket to Hungarian youth. They are energetic, smart, and full of potential. Let them

establish Pakistan as a beloved brand in Hungary." When asked if he would consider returning to Pakistan in the future, Ambassador Fazekas responded with warmth and realism. "Yes, I would. But being closer to 70 than 60, I don't think Pakistan will be high on my bucket list. Still, I look forward to watching Pakistan become one of the success stories of the 21st century—something I believe will happen sooner or later." "A young country with ancient civilization," Fazekas said without hesitation—capturing the essence of Pakistan's identity in a single, powerful sentence. In his parting words, the ambassador expressed deep gratitude: "I just want to thank my Pakistani friends for treating me like one of their own. I apologize if at times I was too honest—perhaps even too blunt—but it was never against them, always for them." Ambassador Béla Fazekas leaves Pakistan with admiration and hope. His tenure has been marked by mutual respect, shared values, and a vision for even closer ties between Hungary and Pakistan. As both nations look to the future, it is evident that education, trade, and cultural exchange will form the bedrock of a truly strategic partnership.

Briefs

Morocco, Syria to reopen embassies

RABAT: Morocco said Saturday it would reopen its embassy in Damascus, signalling renewed support for Syria after the overthrow of longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad, as Damascus announced a similar move. The Moroccan decision was announced in a letter from King Mohammed VI to Syria's interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa, read by the Moroccan foreign minister at an Arab League summit in Baghdad. The letter said Morocco backed the Syrian people "in their quest for freedom, security, and stability". A Syrian foreign ministry statement said top diplomat Asaad al-Shaibani met with Moroccan counterpart Nasser Bourita on the sidelines of the Arab summit and that "the two sides agreed to establish bilateral diplomatic relations".

UK to strike new deal with EU

LONDON: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer is set to sign a new deal with the EU seeking to reset ties after Brexit, his office said Saturday ahead of landmark talks. Starmer will meet on Monday with EU chiefs for the first post-Brexit EU-UK summit aimed at agreeing steps towards a closer relationship between Britain and the 27-country bloc which it left five years ago after an acrimonious and knife-edge referendum. "This week, the prime minister will strike yet another deal that will deliver in the national interest of this country," Downing Street said in a statement, also pointing to recent trade deals with the United States and India. Starmer will welcome EU bosses Ursula von der Leyen and Antonio Costa as well as top EU diplomat Kaja Kallas for Monday's talks at the storied Lancaster House venue in London.

Punjab's business environment flourishes under CM's guidance

Muntaha Ashraf expressed his appreciation for the present government's efforts in creating investment opportunities, highlighting its commitment to economic development and growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Punjab Board of Investment & Trade (PBIT), Muhammad Muntaha Ashraf Sunday praised the CM Maryum Nawaz' efforts to bolster industry, highlighting the expansion of Business Facilitation Centers to provide investors with a single-window solution for their business needs. "Punjab's business environment flourishes under CM's guidance," said PBIT Chairman Muhammad Muntaha Ashraf, highlighting the positive impact of Chief Minister Maryum Nawaz' leadership on the province's industrial landscape, with initiatives like Business Facilitation Centers boosting investment opportunities and streamlining business processes. Currently, 6 facilitation

centers with 28 departments are operating around the clock to cater to investors' needs," he explained in an interview with PTV News. The centers are bound to respond to investors' queries within 45 days, ensuring timely facilitation and support, he mentioned. This initiative aims to promote Punjab as a prime investment destination, fostering a business-friendly environment and streamlining processes for investors, he said. By providing prompt responses and effective facilitation, the centers will help investors navigate regulatory requirements and make informed decisions, he added. Muhammad Muntaha Ashraf highlighted that the Punjab Board of Investment & Trade (PBIT) is also promoting tax incentives to attract investors. These incentives aim to

create a favourable business environment, encouraging investment and economic growth in the region, he highlighted. By offering tax benefits, PBIT seeks to make Punjab an attractive destination for investors, fostering industrial development and job creation, he said, adding, this initiative is part of the broader efforts to streamline business processes and provide support to investors, ultimately contributing to the province's economic prosperity. "We are also focusing on developing special economic zones and providing bank assistance to support investors," he stated. Muntaha Ashraf expressed his appreciation for the present government's efforts in creating investment opportunities, highlighting its commitment to economic development and growth.



GUJRANWALA: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi Meets Patron-in-Chief of Markaz Mustafa, Maulana Muhammad Raza Saqib Mustafai.-DNA

Bilawal's directives spur action on informal housing challenges

LARKANA: Under the special directives of Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President of the Ladies Wing Pakistan, a meeting regarding the Kachi Abadi (informal settlements) of District Larkana was held at Darbar Hall, DC Office Larkana on Saturday which was presided over by Minister for Kachi Abadi, Najmi Alam.

The meeting was attended by Political Secretary to PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and MPA City Larkana, Jamil Ahmed Soomro; PPP District President and MNA Khursheed and other officials. During the meeting, proposals were presented to resolve issues faced by the Kachi Abadi settlements in various areas of District Larkana, including land leases and other challenges. The meeting also saw participation from officials of District Larkana and City District Larkana, chairmen and vice-chairmen of various town committees, and respected officers associated with the Kachi Abadi settlements.—DNA

Naqvi lauds Markaz Mustafa role in islamic education, national unity

GUJRANWALA: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited Markaz Mustafa in Gujranwala and viewed various sections of the center. He also held a meeting with the Patron-in-Chief of Markaz Mustafa, Maulana Muhammad Raza Saqib Mustafai. Mohsin Naqvi praised the exemplary role of Markaz Mustafa in the service of Islam and appreciated the positive attitude of its students. Interior Minister stated that in critical time, the Pakistani nation has emerged as pil-

lar of strength; the powerful enemy has been given a crushing defeat by the nation's iron-clad unity. He expressed gratitude to Allah Almighty for the great victory. He said that the Fatah missiles struck fear into the enemy and shattered the illusion of its so-called power. The Interior Minister clearly stated that the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the armed forces, and the enemy will now think a hundred times before attempting any misad-

venture. Maulana Muhammad Raza Saqib Mustafai said that the Pakistani nation wanted a befitting response, which was delivered by our brave Armed Forces. He added that the nation showed exemplary courage and fearlessness, while the help of Allah Almighty was also on our side. Later, the Patron-in-Chief of Markaz Mustafa, Maulana Muhammad Raza Saqib Mustafai prayed for the country's integrity, stability, development, and prosperity.—DNA

Growing number of epilepsy cases in developing countries big concern

KARACHI/ ANKARA: Growing number of epilepsy cases, particularly in the developing nation, is a big concern, which needs a serious focus of policymakers, said the noted neurophysician of the country, President of Epilepsy Foundation of Pakistan Prof Dr Fowzia Siddiqui.

She was speaking at the second Neuro-Modulation Congress of Turkish speaking countries in Istanbul, Turkey. Prof Dr Fowzia Siddiqui was the only expert from Pakistan who attended this prestigious moot and represented her country. She spoke on two sessions entitled 'Parkinson's disease: symptoms, diagnostic criteria and medical treatment, and 'Long term result of resective and disconnection surgery in epilepsy patients'. Dr Fowzia Siddiqui also shared her experiences about treating epilepsy patients in Pakistan. She said early diagnosis and consistent treatment play a crucial role in a sustainable treatment of epilepsy patients. She expressed concern on costly medication and other treatment methods and stressed the need for a better training of young doctors in this field. She hoped that with pro-patient policies at the government level and increased level of awareness in society this disease could be controlled to a large extent. Professor Sait OzTurk, president of Neuroscience Society of Turkey presented a shield to Dr Fowzia Siddiqui in recognition of her valuable participation and scientific contribution in the second Neuro-Modulation Congress of Turkish speaking countries in Istanbul.—APP

Balochistan govt committed to expedite uplift process: Meena

TURBAT: The Balochistan government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, is taking serious and concrete steps for comprehensive development of the province. Advisor to the Chief Minister on Sports and Youth Affairs, Meena Majeed Baloch shared these views during a media briefing here Sunday. Advisor Baloch emphasized that various development projects were being rapidly implemented across all districts with a clear focus on public welfare. She noted that the provincial government's top priorities include health, education, dignified employment for youth, addressing women's issues, and ensuring the provision of basic necessities of life. Many projects in these sectors have already moved into the execution phase. Highlighting specific initiatives in Dis-

trict Kech, particularly in Sub-Tehsil Mand, she mentioned several key projects including the improvement of healthcare and education infrastructure, provision of clean drinking water, installation of solar systems for women, construction of a common room for female students at Turbat University and road development from M-8 to Meri Kalat. Meena Baloch further stated that the government is actively working to provide respectable job opportunities to unemployed youth, including efforts to send skilled laborers abroad and offer contractual employment within provincial institutions to help reduce public frustration. In response to a question, she said the government is making government hospitals more functional and transferring administrative powers to the grassroots level.

This includes empowering District Health Officers (DHOs) to directly procure medicines at the district level. She cited the provision of operational facilities at DHQ Hospitals in Dera Bugti and Kharan as proof of the government's effective policies. Advisor Baloch also highlighted the construction of an ICU at Turbat Teaching Hospital and the reconstruction of the RHC building in Mand as significant accomplishments. Additionally, she reiterated the government's commitment to promoting agriculture in the Makran Division and ensuring efficient border trade. Meena Majeed Baloch revealed special funding for the Mulla Fazil Club in Sub-Tehsil Mand, signaling continued investment in community and youth development.—DNA

Ahsan stresses adopting Seerat-un-Nabi for societal progress

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has stressed the critical need to integrate the Seerat (life and teachings) of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) into daily life to foster global peace and address pressing social and economic challenges. Speaking at the Seerat Centre in Lahore on Saturday, the minister described the Prophet's (PBUH) life as a universal beacon for humanity. During his address, Ahsan Iqbal announced the PML-N government's initiative to establish nine Seerat Chairs across Pakistan. These chairs will focus on drawing guidance from the Quran and Sunnah in key areas, including leadership, governance, human rights, social justice, welfare, business, trade, education, women's rights, global peace, interfaith harmony, sustainable development, and environmental stewardship. He stressed that these principles will inspire the younger generation to connect with the Prophet's (PBUH) teachings. Following the meeting, the minister toured various sections of the Seerat Center and revealed plans to engage nine distinguished scholars to lead research under the Seerat Chairs.—DNA

NADRA simplifies vital document registration process

PESHAWAR: The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has developed a mobile app for the online registration of birth, death, and change in marital status. The mobile application was prepared for the online registration of changes in marital status, births, and deaths, says the spokesman of NADRA in a press release here Saturday. NADRA spokesman stated that through this app, citizens will be able to register important life events from the comfort of their homes. The mobile app will initially be introduced in Punjab, where biometric verification facilities are being provided in all union councils. The NADRA spokesman also mentioned that NADRA one-window counters are being established in Union Councils of Islamabad for facilitation of people.—DNA

Police arrest 9 drug dealers

RAWALPINDI: As part of the "Drug-Free Punjab" campaign launched under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Rawalpindi Police has intensified its efforts against drug dealers. In recent operations, police have arrested 9 drug dealers from different parts of the city and recovered more than 8 kilograms of drugs from their possession.—APP

Digital sector surges under PM's leadership: Shaza

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Sunday said that Pakistan has transitioned from the brink of economic collapse to a trajectory of sustainable growth and digital transformation under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Speaking to the media, she said that just over two years ago, Pakistan faced serious economic challenges, including fears of default, falling exports, and low investment. However, she added that strong government efforts helped improve the overall economic condition. "The interest rate, which was as high as 23 percent, is now down to 11 percent. Inflation, once nearly 40 percent, has dropped to below 5 percent," she added. She said exports have increased, and overseas Pakistanis sent record remittances, all due

to better planning and teamwork across government institutions. "The government's strategy has not only stabilized the economy but also put us on a sustainable growth path," she said. On the digital front, the minister shared that Pakistan's IT exports — including earnings from freelancers and IT companies — reached over \$3.5 billion between July 2024 and April 2025. Of this, \$3.14 billion came from IT services alone in the first 10 months of the fiscal year. She said Pakistan is moving steadily towards the vision of a 'Digital Pakistan,' where technology supports the economy and ensures inclusive growth. "Our IT sector's trade surplus is the highest among all service sectors, at around \$2.3 billion," she stated. Despite global challenges like reduced demand and trade barriers, Pakistan's IT sector has remained strong and growing. She credited

this to a better economic environment and the Prime Minister's coordinated policies, particularly through platforms like the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which boosted investor confidence. A major achievement, she said, was the country's first Digital FDI Forum, organized with the support of the Saudi-based Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO). The event drew over 500 participants, including 100 international investors, global tech CEOs, development leaders, and government officials. Over 100 Pakistani IT companies presented their products and proposals. The event concluded with signed investment agreements worth \$700 million, not just MoUs. "These investments will benefit the entire economy in the coming years," she said. She thanked the Ministry of IT, PSRB, PTA, Foreign Affairs, Interior Ministry,

DCO, and especially P@SHA Chairman Sajjad Syed for their support in making the forum successful. "The government builds the system and investor trust, and the industry delivers. This \$700 million investment is proof of that partnership," she added. The minister said that Pakistan has crossed 200 million mobile subscribers. She said this shows strong progress toward digital inclusion, giving people from all backgrounds — urban and rural, men and women — access to digital tools. She highlighted that 8 million women started using mobile internet for the first time in 2024, contributing to 13 million new users overall. She attributed this success to the government's Gender Digital Divide Policy, which helped reduce the gap in mobile internet usage between men and women from 38 percent to 25 percent. Women's mobile internet use increased from 33

percent to 45 percent. She said women and youth are key to Pakistan's progress, and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has always supported youth participation in the country's development. The minister praised the efforts of the SIFC, PTA, PSRB, Ignite R&D Fund, and the Universal Service Fund (USF), which connected over 1 million people in more than 900 remote areas last year. As part of the country's digital connectivity drive, internet usage grew by more than 25%, and two new submarine cable projects are also underway. "These steps are building a connected and digital Pakistan, where every citizen will have a digital ID and can access government services through mobile phones — without needing to stand in long queues," she said. She congratulated the nation on the recent successful operations by Pakistan's armed forces.—APP

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Briefs

ICCI President
lauds tariff
reform plan

ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), has welcomed the Government's newly approved five-year tariff reform plan, describing it as a transformative step toward bolstering Pakistan's export potential and economic resilience. In a significant policy shift, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has approved a comprehensive strategy aimed at reducing customs duties, additional customs duties, and regulatory duties on raw materials and semi-finished goods. The initiative is expected to drive export-led growth, attract foreign investment, generate employment, and curb inflation. The approval of this tariff reform plan marks a major milestone for Pakistan's economy, said Nasir Mansoor Qureshi. It reflects a forward-looking vision that aligns with our long-standing demand for a more competitive trade environment. By enabling easier and more affordable access to raw materials, intermediate goods, and capital equipment, the reforms will strengthen domestic industries and promote economic growth. The ICCI President highlighted that the rationalization of tariffs could increase exports by up to \$5 billion by the end of the plan, paving the way for a more competitive presence in global markets. He also expressed optimism that the initiative would attract greater international investment and reduce the current account deficit by encouraging legal imports. These reforms will make our industries more efficient and globally competitive while helping stabilize the national currency and reduce inflationary pressure, Qureshi noted. Concluding his statement, he emphasized the importance of continued collaboration between the public and private sectors to ensure successful implementation and maximize the benefits of the reform package for Pakistan's economic future.—DNA

Agreement
signed with
Chinese college

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Project Co-operation Framework Agreement was recently signed online between Shandong College of Electronic Technology, Lancmall (SMC-Private) Ltd., Punjab TEVTA, Govt College of Technology for Women, Lytton Road, Lahore, and ITMC Technology Company, Gwadar Pro reported. This collaboration aims to strengthen international cooperation in the TVET sector. As part of the initiative, a vocational training institute, "Ban-Mo Academy" will be established at the GCT, Lytton Road, Lahore. The academy will focus on cultivating professional technical expertise through cross-border e-commerce programs. Planned offerings include a cross-border e-commerce vocational skills training center, short-term vocational training courses, advanced local master trainer programs, and digital skills development initiatives aligned with the Chinese enterprise practices and global market needs, the TEVTA added.—DNA

Motorway to serve as vital link
boosting Sino-Pak trade and tourism

But if it is strategically rerouted through lower valleys or includes weather-resistant infrastructure, the issue of seasonal inaccessibility could be permanently resolved

ISLAMABAD: Motorway will serve as a vital link in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), bolstering both trade and tourism between the two countries, Gwadar Pro reported quoting National Highway Authority (NHA). In a major infrastructure breakthrough, the NHA has officially approved the construction of a 235-kilometer four-lane motorway connecting Mansehra to Kaghan, Naran, Jhal Kund, and ultimately Chilas. This strategic project is poised to significantly reduce travel time and enhance regional connectivity. The new Mansehra-Kaghan-Naran-Chilas Motorway will cut the current travel time from seven hours to just two hours, offering a fast, safe, and efficient route through the scenic northern areas

ISSI moot on 'Pakistan and the Region' concludes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Pakistan office, hosted a one-day international conference titled "Pakistan and the Region: Enhancing Regional Connectivity, Addressing Non-Traditional Threats, and Countering Terrorism." Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed was the Chief Guest at the inaugural session. The conference featured three working sessions. The first working session, titled 'Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations: Challenges and Opportunities', was moderated by Director CAMEA, Ms. Amina Khan. The speakers of the session included: Ambassador Qazi Humayun, Pakistan's Former Ambassador to Afghanistan; Mr. Hameed Hakimi, Afghanistan Research and Policy Initiative (ARPI), CHS, Doha; Ambassador Ayaz Wazir, Former Pakistani Ambassador; Mr. Zalmi Nishat, Founder and Executive Chair, Mosaic Foundation, UK; Mr. Tahir Khan, Journalist; and Mr. Muzammil Shinwari, Former Afghan Minister. Speakers discussed key challenges in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, including the TTP threat, India's role, the Taliban's position on cross-border terrorism, and return of refugees. Notwithstanding historical differences, they called for pragmatic, people-centric engagement, emphasizing soft power, and people-to-people ties. Some urged formal recognition of the Taliban to enable peaceful dispute resolution, enhanced trade, and shared resource use. An inclusive Afghan government was seen as



essential, alongside a cooperative approach to dealing with the challenge of TTP and equal engagement with the Taliban. Projects like TAPI and CASA-1000 were highlighted as key opportunities for regional connectivity and a comprehensive trade agreement was proposed to unlock bilateral economic potential. The second Working Session, titled "Regional Security and Countering Terrorism: Evolving Threats and Response Strategies", was moderated by former Ambassador Seema Illahi Baloch. Speakers of the session included: Dr. Rustum Azizi, Research Director at "Tahilil", Tajikistan; Dr. Foad Izadi, Head of the American Studies Department at the University of Tehran, Iran; Am-

bassador Riffat Masood, Former Pakistan Ambassador to Iran; Dr. Murat Aslan, Professor at Hasan Kalyoncu University and SETA Senior Researcher, Turkiye; and Mr. Zeeshan Salahuddin, Director Tabadlab. Speakers stressed the urgent need for regional collaboration to address evolving security threats, noting that while the Taliban are no longer seen as a direct threat to Central Asia, groups like ISIS-K pose growing risks through local recruitment. Outdated threat narratives have bred public mistrust, demanding reassessment amid rising terrorism, militant fragmentation, and transnational issues like water insecurity. Regional connectivity and stability, they emphasised, rely on addressing both traditional and

non-traditional security threats, strengthening internal cohesion, and engaging pragmatically with neighbours. True integration requires bold leadership, mutual trust, and a long-term commitment to peace, development, and regional ownership. The third Working Session was moderated by Dr. Salma Malik, Associate Professor at Defence and Strategic Studies Department, Quaid-i-Azam University, focused on "Addressing Non-Traditional Security Threats: Climate Change and Humanitarian Challenges." Speakers included: Mr. Ye Hailin, Professor and Vice Dean, National Institute of International Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Ambassador Mohammad Javad Shariati, Sen-

ior Fellow, Institute for Political & International Studies (IPIS), Tehran, Iran; Mr. Oves Anwar, Director, Research Society of International Law (RSIL); Dr. Darya Sapranskaya, Researcher, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia; and Ms. Zile Huma, Deputy Secretary, Governor House, Government of Pakistan. During this session, speakers highlighted the urgency of tackling non-traditional security threats, especially climate change, which drives floods, smog, and GLOFs in South Asia. They stressed the humanitarian and economic fallout—food insecurity, migration, and instability—and called for regional cooperation, green partnerships, and stressed the need for urgent, collective action and highlighted the importance of upholding international law to ensure global stability, warning that its erosion undermines efforts to address these complex challenges. The discussion also covered the impacts of digitalisation, demographic shifts, and politicised history on radicalisation, with calls for inclusive education and collective global action to build resilience. In his vote of thanks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman ISSI, emphasised the importance of continued discourse on the region's pressing and complex challenges, noting the rise in non-traditional threats as well. He remarked that the international conference was held at a critical juncture, especially as international law faces erosion amid India's blatant violation of Pakistan's sovereignty. The Conference was attended by a cross-section of participants, including scholars, practitioners, think-tank experts, members of the media, and university students

CDA
launches
merit-based
recruitment
exams

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has initiated a three-day computer-based recruitment examination in collaboration with the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) to ensure a transparent and merit-driven hiring process. The tests, which began on Saturday, will continue until May 19, with over 3,800 candidates expected to participate. Chairman CDA, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, and DG Civil Defence Muhammad Ali Randhawa made a surprise visit to the NUST examination center to review arrangements. He emphasized that the initiative aims to eliminate favoritism and recruit skilled professionals based on merit. "This system ensures transparency at every stage, from screening to final selection, without human interference," Randhawa stated. "CDA needs educated and technologically adept individuals, and this partnership with NUST guarantees we get the best talent." Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CDA and NUST, the exams are being conducted using an automated computer-based testing system. Three daily sessions are being held, accommodating 485 candidates per session. On the first day, 297 candidates appeared in the morning session, followed by 312 in the afternoon, with a higher turnout expected in the evening. Randhawa highlighted that the collaboration with NUST would extend beyond recruitment, incorporating advanced research and training programs to enhance institutional performance.

"This partnership will not only bring capable individuals to CDA but also contribute to national development," he added. NUST officials assured full adherence to merit-based principles, stating their modern examination system would ensure only the most qualified candidates are selected.—APP

Machinery
imports
witness
14.35% surge
in ten months

ISLAMABAD: The imports of the overall machinery group experienced a substantial increase of 14.35 percent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year (July-April) compared to FY 2023-24. The growth in machinery imports would help elevate productivity and spur technological advancements in essential sectors, leading to economic expansion and progress in infrastructure development. The total imports of the machinery group during the 10 months of the FY 2024-25 stood at \$7,729.329 million against the imports of \$6,759.47 million of the corresponding period the last year, according to official data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The import of agriculture sector machinery.—APP

Pakistan Geological
treasures dazzle at
Nanjing Expo

ISLAMABAD: Around 10 Pakistani gems and minerals companies are showcasing their rare and exquisite specimens at the ongoing 2025 China Nanjing (International) Mineral, Gemstone & Fossil Expo, held from May 15 to 19, China Economic Net reported. Now in its third year, the expo has attracted over 500 exhibitors from more than 50 countries, transforming the 40,000-square-meter venue into a global showcase for minerals, gemstones, fossils, and meteorites. Pakistani exhibitors are presenting a dazzling array of emeralds, tourmalines, topaz, morganite, quartz, aquamarine, pyrite, marble and onyx specimens from regions such as Gilgit Baltistan, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These high-quality specimens—ideal for both jewelry and decorative purposes—have attracted significant interest from international buyers and collectors. Pakistan is one of the world's key producers of high-quality gemstones, including emeralds from the Swat Valley and pink topaz from Katlang. However, despite Pakistan's resource potential, mining currently contributes only 3% to GDP. Recognizing the significant role of mineral exports in boosting Pakistan's economy, the Pakistani government unveiled the National Minerals Harmonisation Framework 2025 during April's Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum - a comprehensive policy package aimed at streamlining investment procedures and creating a more favorable regulatory environment for investors, which is expected to accelerate growth in the country's mining sector. Returning exhibitor Ghulam Mustafa of Fine Art Minerals expressed pride in Pakistan's mineral heritage. "Pakistan possesses extraordinary geological treasures, and our trade ties with China are expanding beyond gemstones to industrial minerals," he said. "The response to our display has been phenomenal—visitors are truly impressed by Pakistan's natural wealth." Muhammad Sadiq from Fine Nagar Gems & Minerals, also returned with an expanded collection. "Last year's feedback was incredibly positive and we are very optimistic about this year's sales and orders," he said, adding that, "Pakistan's minerals have a competitive edge, and the Chinese market holds huge potential. We aim to deepen cooperation in this sector.—DNA

cyber defence particularly through its visionary initiative, the National Cyber Security Academy. He expressed admiration that AU graduates are now playing pivotal roles in national security operations and shaping Pakistan's digital future. He also emphasized the importance of innovation, public service, and lifelong learning, urging graduates to carry Pakistan in their hearts and excellence in their hands as they step into a rapidly evolving world. He also acknowledged the vital support extended by the Pakistan Air Force to the university, emphasizing the collaborative efforts that contribute to the success of Air University. He encouraged the graduates to leverage their education and skills to make meaningful contributions to society. Air University faculty and management extended heartfelt congratulations to the 1391 graduates and wishes them success in their future endeavors. Air University remains committed to providing quality education and shaping the leaders of tomorrow.—DNA

ical role in safeguarding national cyber infrastructure—efforts now cited as a model of cyber defence excellence. He called upon the youth to channel their skills toward building a better Pakistan, reversing the brain drain by creating homegrown solutions and innovations. The convocation also paid tribute to the invaluable support of parents and families, while reaffirming the University's ongoing commitment to its alumni as lifelong partners in success. In his speech, the chief guest Prof. Dr. Mukhtar, congratulated the graduating students on their hard-earned success, especially the high achievers, acknowledging their dedication, resilience, and commitment to excellence. He applauded the unwavering support of parents and the tireless efforts of Air University's faculty in shaping future leaders. Recognizing Air University as one of Pakistan's premier higher education institutions, he commended its contributions in critical areas such as aerospace engineering, artificial intelligence, and

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Air University (AU) marked a momentous occasion as it celebrated the 12th convocation honoring the achievements of 1391 graduates who successfully completed their degree programs. The ceremony, held at AU main campus Islamabad, was graced by the proud parents, esteemed faculty members and distinguished guests. Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman Higher Education Commission presided over the convocation ceremony as chief guest. The highlight of the convocation was the conferring of degrees, including 21 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) recipients, 35 Gold medalists, and 29 Silver medalists. The University takes immense pride in the dedication and hard work exhibited by these graduates throughout their academic journey. The Vice-Chancellor, Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan HI (M) (Retd), delivered an inspiring report to the graduates and their parents, highlighting the University's commitment to academic excellence and its ambitious vision for the future. In his address, he lauded the graduates for their perseverance, academic achievements, and innovative mindset, reiterating the University's mission to produce individuals who are not only industry-ready but also nation-ready. He emphasized that with more than 12,000 students currently enrolled across campuses in Islamabad, Multan, Kamra, and Kharian—and with two new campuses in H-11 Islamabad and Karachi set to launch in Fall 2025—Air University continues to strengthen its national footprint in higher education. The Vice-Chancellor proudly shared the University's rising profile, including its 2nd position in Pakistan in the Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings, 2nd position nationwide in HEC's ORIC performance assessment, and recognition in the X category of HEC's BIC Scorecard, affirming AU's growing impact in research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Graduates, particularly from the fields of Cybersecurity and IT, were acknowledged for their critical

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Gaza is not a war – it is a genocide

FOR months, the world has watched in horror as Gaza is relentlessly bombarded, its people displaced, starved, and killed. Yet, much of the international media and political discourse continues to call it a “war.” This is not just inaccurate—it is dangerously misleading. What is unfolding in Gaza is not a war. It is a genocide.

A war implies a conflict between two sides of relatively equal power, each capable of inflicting damage, defending itself, and making strategic choices. Gaza, blockaded and impoverished for over 15 years, has no army, no air force, no navy. Its people are trapped in one of the most densely populated regions on Earth, with no safe zones, no bomb shelters, and no means to escape. To describe what’s happening there as a “war” is to deny the fundamental imbalance of power—and the immense suffering of a civilian population. What we are witnessing is the systematic destruction of a people. Entire families have been wiped out in airstrikes. Hospitals, schools, refugee camps, and UN facilities have been targeted. International humanitarian organizations have repeatedly warned of mass starvation and disease, yet the siege continues. This is not collateral damage. It is policy—one designed to make life in Gaza unlivable. In this context, U.S. President Donald Trump’s recent remarks during his Gulf tour—that Gaza “needs help”—ring hollow unless they are followed by concrete action. Trump made these statements while visiting the Gulf, where leaders are more sensitive to the Palestinian cause. Was it a moment of empathy or a calculated move to appease his hosts? The real test will come when he returns to the United States or travels to Europe or Israel. Will he have the courage to repeat such statements there? Will he call for a ceasefire, demand accountability, or support humanitarian aid? Or will his concern for Gaza conveniently fade away when he’s no longer speaking to an Arab audience? Words without action are meaningless. If Trump—or any global leader—is truly concerned about the plight of Gazans, they must push for practical measures: immediate ceasefire, unimpeded humanitarian access, rebuilding efforts, and most importantly, a path toward justice and accountability. The International Criminal Court, human rights organizations, and independent observers must be allowed to investigate potential war crimes. Anything less would be complicity. The world must stop calling this a “war.” It is not. It is a one-sided massacre, enabled by global silence, shielded by distorted language, and prolonged by political cowardice. Refusing to name it for what it is—genocide—only emboldens the aggressors and deepens the suffering of the victims. History will judge the world not only by what it did during this tragedy, but by what it failed to say. Let us speak the truth: Gaza is not at war. Gaza is being exterminated. And silence, in the face of genocide, is unforgivable.

Trump resets U.S.-Pakistan relations after India conflict

Qamar Bashir



The four-day war not only redrew the strategic map of South Asia but also laid bare two starkly contrasting global narratives. India—long portraying itself as a rising superpower—found its arrogance, militarism, and misinformation unraveling before the world. Pakistan, in contrast, emerged as a composed, competent actor, commanding military respect and diplomatic credibility. India entered the conflict with misplaced confidence, believing its large defense budget, international lobbying

PRESIDENT Donald Trump, while addressing American troops in Qatar, noted that Pakistan’s use of “a different kind of missile” had forced India to request a ceasefire. He added that the United States would deepen trade ties with Pakistan and urged American institutions to accelerate commercial engagement. In a rare moment of unqualified praise, Trump described Pakistanis as “brilliant people” who invent and produce cutting-edge technology—a clear nod to Pakistan’s domestic defense industry and scientific acumen.

After years of strategic neglect, Pakistan has reemerged in U.S. foreign policy considerations. The war with India in May 2025 served as a turning point, forcing a global reassessment of South Asia’s power dynamics. Trump’s repeated positive mentions of Pakistan reflect a recalibrated U.S. outlook, acknowledging Pakistan’s growing relevance in regional and international affairs.

The four-day war not only redrew the strategic map of South Asia but also laid bare two starkly contrasting global narratives. India—long portraying itself as a rising superpower—found its arrogance, militarism, and misinformation unraveling before the world. Pakistan, in contrast, emerged as a composed, competent actor, commanding military respect and diplomatic credibility. India entered the conflict with misplaced confidence, believing its large defense budget, international lobbying, and media dominance would shield it from scrutiny. But its assumptions quickly crumbled. Since the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution—unilaterally and in defiance of UN resolutions—India had adopted a tone of supreme arrogance. That arrogance culminated in the May 2025 aggression, when India, without presenting irrefutable evidence, blamed Pakistan for the Pahalgam attack and launched missile strikes on Pakistani territory. India’s gambit backfired. For the first time in decades, the world refused to parrot India’s “terrorist state” label for Pakistan. Instead, New Delhi’s actions were seen as a unilateral, unprovoked act of war. The Kashmir issue, long buried under media blackouts and military occupation, reemerged on the global agenda. Trump himself declared that resolving

the Kashmir dispute was essential for sustainable peace in the region.

India’s efforts to diplomatically isolate Pakistan not only failed but boomeranged. Major global powers—excluding perhaps Israel—remained neutral or subtly critical of India’s conduct. Russia, the United States, and European nations refrained from backing New Delhi. Even traditional allies in the Gulf and the broader Muslim world declined to endorse India’s narrative. International media questioned India’s disinformation, timing, and lack of credible evidence. Even strategic allies like the U.S. and Russia withheld support during India’s military debacle.

Politically, the impact was severe. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s once mythic stature among Hindu nationalists eroded rapidly. Calls for his resignation grew louder, and the opposition, civil society, and independent media demanded accountability. Globally, Modi’s image suffered irreparable damage, with analysts condemning his militarized policies, suppression of minorities, and use of conflict for electoral gains. In contrast, Pakistan earned global admiration for its restraint, precision, and strategic maturity. Its missiles hit key Indian military targets while sparing civilian areas—a combination of tactical brilliance and moral responsibility. Pakistan’s electronic warfare systems also rendered India’s expensive defense hardware ineffective, showcasing its technological edge. Diplomatically, Pakistan performed with poise. China and Turkey openly supported it, while countries from Africa to Southeast Asia celebrated its victory. The United States and Western allies, though silent, acknowledged Pakistan’s competence by their inaction in support of India. Pakistani officials, from the Prime Minister to military spokespeople, engaged transparently with the media, offering facts and fielding difficult questions—in sharp contrast to India’s evasive and scripted responses. International media recognized this openness and began to shift their tone. Pakistan, once portrayed as unstable and aggressive, was now seen as principled, disciplined, and transparent. Its moral standing improved as it framed its re-

sponse within the bounds of international law and emphasized civilian protection.

Domestically, Pakistan witnessed a rare moment of unity. Citizens of all ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds rallied behind their armed forces. The war became a catalyst for national pride, reinforcing belief in self-reliance, technological capability, and institutional strength. Even opposition parties praised the government and military for their coordinated and effective response. Crucially, Pakistan used this momentum to reignite global focus on Kashmir. With Trump endorsing mediation, Pakistan gained diplomatic traction. Its dignified wartime conduct and consistent call for peace lent it moral and political capital it had long sought. This war did not last long, but its consequences will resonate for decades. India’s image as a stable democracy and rising power has been seriously undermined. The myth of Pakistan as a rogue state has been debunked. What remains is a clearer understanding: arrogance is not strategy, propaganda is not policy, and suppression is not victory. As one oversees patriotic Pakistani Mr. Mubeen Ahmed Qureshi put it, this strategic space, created by the collective national resolve that defeated a far larger and better-equipped adversary, gives every reason for Pakistan to celebrate. But more importantly, Pakistan must seize this moment—not just to revel in triumph but to take a step back, identify its political, economic, financial, trade, and investment roadblocks, and with the same spirit it fought the war, begin to put its house in order. Only then can Pakistan reemerge as a significant regional and global player—not only militarily, but across all elements of national power. The war has redrawn South Asia’s narrative landscape. The world must now reckon with a new geopolitical truth: Pakistan is no longer the problem—it is part of the solution. Meanwhile, unless India reforms its policies, rhetoric, and regional behavior, it risks becoming its own worst enemy.

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An analysis of Indus water treaty

Fiza Shaheen



The river system comprises six major rivers: the Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej. Under the treaty, the three western rivers—Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab were allocated to Pakistan, while the three eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej were allocated to India. Given that India was already utilizing the eastern rivers and Pakistan heavily depends on the western rivers for its water needs, this division aimed to provide a fair and practical solution

THE Indus Waters Treaty is a landmark water-sharing agreement between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank. It was formulated to resolve disputes over the utilization of the Indus River system, which is vital for the agriculture, energy, and livelihoods of both nations. The river system comprises six major rivers: the Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej. Under the treaty, the three western rivers—Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab were allocated to Pakistan, while the three eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej were allocated to India. Given that India was already utilizing the eastern rivers and Pakistan heavily depends on the western rivers for its water needs, this division aimed to provide a fair and practical solution.

India was permitted to use the western rivers for limited non-consumptive purposes such as irrigation, transport, and hydropower generation, provided these uses did not interfere with the water flow to Pakistan. Despite several armed conflicts between the two countries, the treaty has endured and is often regarded as a successful model of conflict resolution. A Permanent Indus Commission, consisting of representatives from both countries, was established to facilitate data exchange and resolve water-related issues. However, the treaty now faces mounting challenges. Climate change, glacial retreat, and increasing water demand due to population growth are placing significant strain on the river system. Pakistan frequently raises concerns about Indian dam projects on the western rivers, fearing they could provide India with strategic leverage or reduce water flow. India, on the other hand, asserts that these projects comply with the treaty’s provisions and that Pakistan’s objections are unfounded. Furthermore, the treaty has not been updated to address modern environmental and technical challenges such as groundwater depletion, pollution, and global warming. Although dialogue has been pursued, entrenched mistrust continues to hinder effective cooperation. The Indus River system, comprising six principal rivers Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej became a contentious issue following the 1947 partition of British India. The creation of India and Pakistan introduced new political boundaries, making the distribution of water resources a critical concern. A formal agreement became essential to prevent future disputes and ensure stable water sharing between the two nations. The treaty, signed in 1960, outlines the following arrangements: Eastern Rivers: India received exclu-

sive rights over the Beas, Ravi, and Sutlej rivers. It is permitted full use of these rivers for domestic, agricultural, and industrial purposes. Pakistan, while not allowed to obstruct India’s use, is permitted limited use for irrigation. Western Rivers: The Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab rivers were allocated to Pakistan. These rivers are crucial for Pakistan’s agriculture and economy. India is allowed non-consumptive uses such as limited irrigation and hydropower generation, provided these activities do not reduce the quantity or alter the timing of water flows into Pakistan. The treaty has played a crucial role in ensuring relatively stable water relations between India and Pakistan. It has enabled the development of water management infrastructure and supported agricultural productivity in both countries. Nonetheless, several pressing issues now confront the treaty’s continued effectiveness: Water Scarcity: Rapid population growth in both nations has significantly increased the demand for freshwater. Climate change is impacting rainfall patterns and accelerating the melting of Himalayan glaciers. Inefficient irrigation systems, pollution, and limited storage capacity further exacerbate water stress. Political Tensions: Although the treaty is often considered a symbol of cooperation, it becomes contentious during periods of heightened political tensions. India has occasionally expressed interest in revisiting the treaty due to broader geopolitical disputes. Pakistan routinely protests against Indian hydroelectric projects on the western rivers, fearing a negative impact on water flows. Environmental Concerns: Infrastructure projects permitted under the treaty, such as dams and barrages, can disrupt ecosystems, displace communities, and degrade wetlands and fisheries. Changes in river flow can affect biodiversity and reduce the ecosystem’s ability to adapt to climate change. These developments underscore the urgent need to modernize the treaty to address evolving environmental, technical, and geopolitical realities. Reaffirmed in October 2023, the Indus Waters Treaty remains a cornerstone for the management of the Indus River system. While it has withstood decades of political and military strain, it now confronts more complex and urgent challenges: Water Shortages:

Rising populations and unpredictable water availability due to climate change have heightened water stress. Poor water management practices, including inefficient irrigation and widespread pollution, further strain the system. Geopolitical Tensions: Despite the treaty’s relative detachment from broader conflicts, periods of increased hostility have led to calls within India to reassess the agreement. Pakistan has objected to Indian projects such as the Kishanganga and Ratle dams, fearing detrimental effects on downstream water availability. India maintains these projects are in compliance with treaty stipulations. Environmental Degradation: Construction of dams and canals may alter sediment flow, disrupt aquatic ecosystems, and reduce biodiversity. Downstream communities in Pakistan often face water scarcity and declining agricultural yields. Despite these difficulties, opportunities for cooperation remain. Modernizing the treaty could involve incorporating environmental safeguards, improving transparency in data sharing and project planning, and possibly engaging third-party mediators like the World Bank to restore trust and facilitate dialogue. The Indus Waters Treaty has served as a durable framework for water-sharing between India and Pakistan, even during times of significant political turmoil. However, new and persistent challenges necessitate renewed focus and collaboration. Urbanization, population growth, and unsustainable water practices are intensifying water scarcity. Climate change compounds these problems by altering precipitation patterns and accelerating glacial melt. Political disagreements over Indian infrastructure projects on the western rivers have deepened mutual distrust. Although dispute resolution mechanisms exist, mutual confidence remains fragile. Environmental concerns are increasingly salient, as large-scale infrastructure and altered hydrological flows threaten ecosystems and downstream communities. To ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of the treaty, both nations must commit to its modernization, enhance communication, and pursue sustainable water management strategies. Only through genuine cooperation can they secure shared water resources for future generations.



Briefs

DG ISPR
warns India
of long-term..

FROM PAGE 01
spokesperson was asked about the progress of the investigation, he even admitted that it was still ongoing. The army's spox emphasised that Pakistan has taken a clear and transparent stance, saying that if India has any evidence linking the attack to Pakistan, it should be presented to a neutral and credible international body. Pakistan, he said, remains ready to cooperate fully. "Not opting to go for that very rational approach, unilaterally, the Indians decided and they attacked mosques, they bombed mosques, with their missiles, they killed children, women, elderly. There are 40 shaheeds, 40 civilian shaheeds, 22 of them are women and children," he said. The DG ISPR condemned India's behaviour as acting unilaterally as "judge, jury and executioner". He further highlighted that India is the principal sponsor of terrorism in Pakistan, citing its involvement in fuelling extremist elements such as Fitna al-Khawarij and supporting terrorist networks in Balochistan. He reaffirmed the Pakistan Armed Forces' commitment to defending the country's sovereignty. "The task that has been entrusted to the Pakistan Armed Forces by the people and the state is to defend its territory, integrity and sovereignty." "This is that honourable task that has been entrusted to us, and we will defend it at all costs," he asserted.

Pakistan
aims for
economic..

FROM PAGE 01
India on the battlefield. Concurrently, Pakistan's political leadership outmaneuvered India diplomatically, exposing their aggression on international forums," he added. Highlighting historical parallels, he recalled Pakistan's six nuclear tests on May 28, 1998, under Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, which established the nation's strength. Similarly, on May 10, 2025, Pakistani forces shot down six Indian warplanes, avenging the 1971 war and reaffirming their superiority. Our civil and military leadership upheld the nation's honor, defeating India on all fronts, he maintained. The minister praised the Pakistani media and social media activists for countering Indian propaganda and exposing their falsehoods. He also paid homage to the civilian and military martyrs, noting the sacrifices of brave mothers who send their sons to defend the nation. "No force can defeat a nation ready to sacrifice with shrouds on their heads," Tarar said, drawing inspiration from the Battle of Badr, where divine support led to victory despite numerical odds. He criticized India's rejection of a fair investigation into the Pahalgam incident, which led to their nighttime attack on Pakistani civilians. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, he noted, effectively highlighted India's aggression globally, contributing to their diplomatic isolation. The minister also lauded Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) workers for their role in shaping the narrative on social media, noting that India's public is now questioning their government and media amid national mourning.

At least
four killed
in Qila...

FROM PAGE 01
wounded persons were being shifted to Quetta due to lack of health facilities in the area. At the time of the explosion, tribal leader Haji Faizullah Khan Ghabizai was also present at his office. The tribal leader, his security guard and a passerby were also among wounded persons. Heavy contingents of law enforcement agencies cordoned off the whole area and commenced a search and clearance operation. Pakistan has witnessed surge in terror incidents since Taliban rulers returned to Afghanistan in 2021, particularly in the bordering provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Pakistan Hockey Federation Takes Bold Step

Olympian Anjum Saeed
banned for one year

In a strong and clear message, PHF President Mir Tariq Hussain Bugti stated: "We are committed to restoring Pakistan hockey to its former glory. Corruption, favoritism, and moral decay will no longer be tolerated. This decision is just the beginning of a series of reforms to ensure transparency and merit-based opportunities"

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark decision that could reshape the future of Pakistan's national sport, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has imposed a one-year ban on Olympian Anjum Saeed. The decision was made by PHF President Mir Tariq Hussain Bugti, marking a significant shift toward accountability, transparency, and meritocracy within the federation. The ban on Anjum Saeed is not just about disciplinary action against one individual; it's a message to the entire hockey fraternity. The PHF has taken this step to cleanse the system of entrenched practices that have long plagued the sport, such as favoritism, nepotism, and misuse of authority. This action signals the beginning of a new era of reforms in Pakistan hockey. The PHF's decision comes after an internal inquiry revealed serious



Mir Tariq Hussain Bugti,
President Pakistan Hockey Federation

violations by Anjum Saeed. The specific charges include: Receiving double daily allowances, an unethical financial practice. Favoritism in team selections and umpiring, giving undue preference to certain players and officials. Nepotism, promoting associates and relatives within the system. Blatant violation of PHF regulations, undermining the federation's credibility and integrity. These findings represent a pattern of behavior that contradicts the core values of fairness, professionalism, and national interest.

In a strong and clear message, PHF President Mir Tariq Hussain Bugti stated: "We are committed to restoring Pakistan hockey to its former glory. Corruption, favoritism, and moral decay will no longer be tolerated. This decision is just the beginning of a series of reforms to ensure transparency and merit-based opportunities."

His statement underscores a resolve to purge the federation of malpractices and create a level playing field for all. The response from players, coaches, and fans has been overwhelmingly positive: Young players welcomed the decision, calling it a "clean-up move" for the sport. Coaches and support staff appreciated the federation's willingness to take tough action. On social media, hashtags like #HockeyJustice, #CleanHockey, and #MeritInPakistanHockey trended widely, indicating widespread support for the decision.

This outpouring of public and professional support shows a collective desire for change and accountability in the sport. With this bold step, the PHF has set the tone for a new chapter in Pakistan hockey: Merit-based selection will be the new standard. Transparency in operations will be enforced. Young and deserving talent will be given priority and a platform to shine. The ban on Anjum Saeed serves as a warning to all officials and stakeholders that integrity and professionalism will be non-negotiable going forward. If Pakistan hockey is to reclaim its place on the world stage, such reforms are not only necessary—they are urgent. As the PHF continues its journey of reform, the hope is that Pakistan's golden era of hockey can be revived, with discipline, fairness, and dedication at its core.

PSL 10: Hasan Nawaz's last-ball six
steers Quetta to victory over Multan
Nawaz remains unbeaten on match-winning 67 off 38 balls,
guiding his side home in nail-biting finish

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Quetta Gladiators concluded their league stage on a gallant note when middle-order batter Hasan Nawaz struck a last-ball six to steer his team to victory over Multan Sultans in the 28th match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 10 at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Sunday. Chasing a challenging target of 186, the Gladiators got off to a flying start as the opening pair of skipper Saud Shakeel and Khawaja Nafay came out with an aggressive intent. The duo stitched together a quickfire 60-run partnership in the powerplay, laying a strong foundation. Nawaz was the standout performer, bringing up yet another PSL half-century with a flurry of boundaries. His 51 off just 26 balls, featuring five fours and four sixes at a strike rate of 196.15, kept the required rate in check. The 77-run opening stand was broken when Shahid Aziz removed Nafay. Soon after, skipper Saud Shakeel fell for



a sluggish 18 off 24 balls, leaving Quetta at 81/2 in 8.5 overs.

Sri Lankan batter Avishka Fernando, playing his first PSL 10 match, failed to make an impact and departed for 7, again to Shahid Aziz, reducing the Gladiators to 87/3. Veteran Sri Lankan Dinesh Chandimal kept the scoreboard ticking alongside Hassan Nawaz, pushing the total past the 100-run mark. Chandimal's short but vital knock of 17 off 10 ended at 116/4, courtesy of Ubaid Shah. The collapse continued as Danish Aziz was dismissed for a duck by Peter Hatzoglu, and Faheem Ashraf, after contributing 16, fell at a crucial juncture with the score at 159/6 in 17.1 overs.

Mohammad Wasim Jr was run out for just 1 in the 18th over, intensifying the pressure. However, Hassan Nawaz stood firm. With 11 runs needed off the final over, the young batter kept his nerve. He finished the match in style, smashing a six off the last ball to seal the win. Nawaz remained unbeaten on a match-winning 67 off 38 balls, guiding his side home in a nail-biting finish.

Karachi Kings thump Peshawar Zalmi
in Pakistan Super League X clash

David Warner-led Kings qualify for marquee tournament's playoffs alongside Islamabad United

RAWALPINDI: Karachi Kings defeated Peshawar Zalmi by 23 runs, successfully defending a massive target of 238 runs in the 27th match of Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 10 at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Saturday. After the victory, the David Warner-led Kings qualified for the PSL 10 playoffs, alongside defending champions Islamabad United. Chasing a daunting 238-run target, Zalmi could only manage 214/5 in their allotted 20 overs and thus succumbed to a massive defeat. Zalmi got off to a brief flying start to the pursuit as their new opening pair of Mohammad Harris (nine) and Saim Ayub stitched a brisk 30-run stand, culminating with the former's dismissal in the third over. Ayub was

then involved in an important 77-run partnership for the second wicket with skipper Babar until falling victim to Abbas Afridi in the 11th over. He scored 47 off 31 deliveries with the help of five fours and two sixes. Babar then shared one-sided partnerships with Tom Kohler-Cadmore and Max Bryant until having an agonising end to his courageous knock as he got run out just seven shy of a well-deserved century. He remained the top-scorer for Zalmi with a 49-ball 94, laced with 10 fours and four sixes. His dismissal had reduced Peshawar Zalmi to 184/5 in 17.5 overs, needing a further 55 runs in 13 deliveries. All-rounders Maaz Sadaqat and Hussain Talat could only add 30 runs to the total, scoring 19 and 12 not out

respectively. Abbas was the pick of the Kings' bowlers for taking two wickets for 48 runs in his four overs, while Hasan Ali and Mir Hamza made one scalp apiece. Put into bat first, the Kings registered a formidable total of 237/4 in their allotted 20 overs, courtesy of a marathon second-wicket partnership between Warner and Vince. Karachi Kings, however, had a contrasting start to their innings as Luke Wood cleaned up debutant Ben McDermott on the first delivery of the innings. Following the early stutter, Vince joined Warner in the middle, and together they launched an astounding recovery by putting together 162 runs for the second wicket until Ali Raza dismissed the former in the 15th over. Vince smashed 11 fours and a six on his way to a 42-ball 72. The Kings then lost another wicket in the next over when Wood dismissed in-form Muhammad Irfan Khan for two. — DNA

Sirbaz Khan scales
all 8,000m peaks

Less than 25 climbers worldwide have summited all 14 peaks without oxygen

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistani mountaineer Sirbaz Khan has become the first and only person from the country to summit all 14 of the world's 8,000-metre peaks without using supplemental oxygen, completing the historic feat on Sunday by reaching the top of Kangchenjunga. Khan, a resident of Hunza valley, summited the 8,586m peak at 11:50am local time, marking the culmination of a years-long quest. While he had previously climbed all 14 of the "eight-thousanders," he had used bottled oxygen on two of those earlier ascents near the summit. To achieve the no-oxygen distinction, he returned this season to climb Annapurna in April and Kangchenjunga in May, both without artificial oxygen support. "Even though I had summited all 14×8000m peaks in the world, there was still something missing," Sirbaz had said when he arrived at Annapurna earlier. "When I first announced my project after summiting Nanga Parbat in 2017, my aim was simple: 14×8000m summits without using O2, and that's why I returned." Khan is among an elite group of around 70 climbers worldwide who have summited all 14 peaks above 8,000m.

Relief to be
provided to
common..

FROM PAGE 01

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Syed Naveed Qamar and leading representatives of the business community at the Chief Minister House and discussed the budget making process. Talking to reporters after the meeting at the Governor House, Rana Sanaullah said that just as the entire nation has proved in its victory against India with unity that the country's defense is in strong hands, now we should have to move forward for economic prosperity in the country. He said that like the defense sector, the country has now come out of the economic crisis and the economic team headed by Federal Finance Minister Aurangzeb under the supervision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, also decided to provide relief to the common men in the upcoming budget. He said that there will be good news for the people in the new budget. He hoped that a good budget will be presented in consultation with the coalition partners and the business community representatives, which will provide relief to the common men. Rana Sanaullah said that the meetings at the Chief Minister's House and the Governor's House have proved to be useful and its effects will be visible in the new budget.

Bomb kills
one near
California...

FROM PAGE 01

Davis did not comment on the relationship - if any - between the victim and the person of interest in the investigation. Video posted online showed the single-story structure that houses some of the clinic's operations. The bomb appeared to have ripped a gaping hole in one of its walls and caused damage throughout the building. Several other buildings in the area were damaged, some extensively, authorities said. California Governor Gavin Newsom has been briefed on the explosion, his office said. American Reproductive Centres, which has offices in at least three California cities, provides services including in vitro fertilisation, genetic testing and in-house egg donation.

Pakistan
to 'keep
airspace...

FROM PAGE 01

been noticed in the situation that forced Pakistan to take the action. The sources reminded that under the rules of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), no member country could close its airspace for another more than a month in one go. It should be noted that the military engagements lasting more than three days between nuclear-armed neighbours earlier this month have aggravated relations further.



ISLAMABAD: The 3rd Friendship Through Sports (FTS) Diplomatic Golf Cup was successfully held at Pine Golf Club, bringing together diplomats and defence officials from around the world. Among the distinguished participants were the Ambassadors of Poland and Japan, along with Defence Advisors from Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, the Czech Republic, and diplomats from Australia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, Vietnam, Germany, Belgium, and China. Colonel Ipin of Malaysia clinched the overall title, winning the 3rd FTS Diplomatic Cup, while the Ambassador of Japan secured victory in his category. The event highlighted unity, camaraderie, and the strengthening of diplomatic ties through sports. — DNA

Briefs

**Morocco
to reopen
embassy in
Syria after
Assad fall**

RABAT: Morocco said Saturday it will reopen its embassy in Damascus, closed since 2012, signalling renewed support for Syria after the overthrow of longtime ruler Bashar Assad. The decision was announced in a letter from King Mohammed VI to Syria's interim President Ahmed Al-Sharaa, read by the Moroccan foreign minister at an Arab League summit in Baghdad. The letter said Morocco backed the Syrian people "in their quest for freedom, security, and stability." Rabat severed diplomatic ties with Damascus in 2012 amid the Syrian civil war, which began in 2011 after Assad's violent crackdown on anti-government protests. Assad was toppled in December in a swift offensive by Islamist-led rebels. The 13-year civil war killed more than 500,000 people and displaced millions.—APP

**UK PM to
agree deal to
strengthen EU
partnership**

LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is set to agree a deal next week to strengthen the country's post-Brexit partnership with the European Union and to facilitate trade in some food products, his office said on Saturday. Starmer will welcome EU leaders to London on Monday to help reset relations with the bloc, with both sides aiming to secure progress in specific areas while others will remain off-limits. Britain left the EU in 2020, but Starmer has been trying to boost ties with the country's biggest trading partner since his center-left Labour Party won last year's national election. The summit will result in a deal, his office said, though it provided few details beyond saying it would improve the situation for British producers currently facing checks on products or unable to export, and also that it would ease matters for families facing higher bills and queues when traveling. "This week, the Prime Minister will strike yet another deal that will deliver in the national interest of this country. It will be good for growth, good for jobs, good for bills, and good for our borders," Starmer's 10 Downing Street office said in a statement. Starmer on Friday raised the prospect that a youth mobility deal with the European Union would be struck at the summit.—APP

**KSA's expat
remittances
hit near 9-year
high**

RIYADH: Expatriate remittances from Saudi Arabia soared to SR15.5 billion (\$4.13 billion) in March 2024, marking a 29.61 percent year-on-year increase. According to data released by the Saudi Central Bank, also known as SAMA, this is the highest monthly level recorded in nearly nine years. The surge reflects an increasingly attractive labor market in the Kingdom and growing momentum in digital payment adoption, enabling smoother international money transfers for the country's large expatriate population. In parallel, transfers made by Saudi citizens also rose to SR6.5 billion, representing a 27.6 percent increase over the same period and reaching their highest level in almost three years, SAMA figures show. The remittance upswing comes amid broader growth in cross-border transactions. According to Visa's "Money Travels: 2024 Digital Remittances Adoption" report, published in October, senders in the Kingdom are primarily motivated to provide ongoing financial support to families, address urgent needs, and contribute to health and education-related costs. These priorities have helped sustain high transaction volumes despite global remittance trends softening elsewhere. The analysis also highlighted that digital platforms are now the preferred method for sending money internationally from Saudi Arabia. More than half of the surveyed users said they plan to increase their use of digital channels in the coming year.—APP

Economic stability not possible without brand protection

Other business owners echoed the call for the government to engage with them in dialogue and assured full cooperation in resolving such issues collaboratively

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Owners of prominent and reputable brands operating in various sectors of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have stated that stable brands emerging from the private sector's hard work, integrity, and long-term investment do not receive institutional protection in Pakistan. Government officials from various departments often seal businesses over minor administrative or technical issues, which not only severely damages their reputation but also affects investment and business continuity. These views were expressed during a dinner reception hosted in honor of Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of the United Business Group (FPC-CL). The event was attended by notable business figures including Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari (D. Watson), Tariq Mehmood (Shaheen), Chaudhry Tahir Mehmood (Punjab), Nauman Khan (Gillani), Dr. Rizwan Opal (IDC), Hamza Ali Khan (Christie's), Roohail Anwar Butt (Shikarpuri), Junaid Ahmed (Tandori), Luqman Ali Afzal (Monal), Shamsuddin Sultan (Shams), Habibullah Zahid (Habibi), Umar Farooq (Cheezious), Usman Shehzad (Rep Lab), Umar Akmal (Friends),



and Hafiz Manzoor (Madina), among other distinguished entrepreneurs. Speaking at the event, Zafar Bakhtawari said, "We fully believe in the rule of law, but we also believe that any action against a credible, renowned, and diligently built brand must be preceded by thorough investigation, prior notice, and a transparent process." He stressed that government must review the unchecked powers of public officials. He added, "No brand is built in hours or days; it is the result of years of strug-

gle and billions in investment. Our brands are national assets. Any action against them must be approved at a high level, follow a transparent process, and include consultation with brand owners." Ahsan Bakhtawari emphasized that if Pakistan aims to stand among developed nations, it must treat its brands as national assets. "Unfortunately, businesspeople are often viewed with suspicion, even though they are the backbone of employment, taxation, and economic growth," he said. He further stated that brands are a

source of national pride, and any unnecessary or baseless action against them harms the country's business reputation. "We need a balanced and respectful system. A successful brand is the result of years of hard work, investment, and consistency. Targeting such brands on arbitrary grounds undermines business confidence and damages the national economy." Luqman Ali Afzal noted, "We have introduced Pakistan's name to the world, and now we are seeking protection from our own institutions. We have raised the hospitality industry

to international standards. If we are treated with interrogation rather than respect and partnership, who will invest here? We need protection and trust, not humiliation." Roohail Anwar Butt remarked, "Our products are used by the general public. Shutting down businesses without notice over minor objections directly harms our business credibility." Other business owners echoed the call for the government to engage with them in dialogue and assured full cooperation in resolving such issues collaboratively.

First US pope Leo XIV takes to popemobile ahead of inaugural mass

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo XIV, the first US pontiff, made his debut tour of St Peter's Square on Sunday in a popemobile, greeting tens of thousands of pilgrims and well-wishers ahead of his inauguration. Chicago-born Robert Francis Prevost, who became head of the world's 1.4 billion Catholics on May 8, stood in the white vehicle as it drove through cheering crowds, smiling, waving and making the sign of the cross. US Vice President JD Vance is among the hundreds of dignitaries due to attend the inauguration mass that begins at 10:00 am (0800 GMT). Leo will preside over the ceremony rich in rites and symbols, where he will receive his special papal ring before giving a homily that will set the tone for his papacy. After spending two decades as a missionary in Peru, the 69-year-old is unknown to many Catholics, but during the past week he has offered glimpses of the kind of leader he will be. In meetings with journalists, clergy and diplomats, he repeatedly called for peace in a world full of conflicts and defended social justice. He also emphasized traditional Catholic values, including the importance of a family built around a "stable union of a man and a woman", and defended the rights of the unborn. Inacia Lisboa, 71, originally from Cape Verde but who lives in Rome, said she got up early to get a good spot to see a man she said had already "entered my heart". Asked what she wanted to hear from him, she told AFP: "The first thing is that he prays for us all, for peace in the world - we need it so much." Leo's elevation has sparked huge enthusiasm in the United States, which is being represented on Sunday by Vance, who converted to Catholicism in 2019, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, also a Catholic. Before becoming pope, the new pontiff on his personal X account reposted criticism of President Donald Trump's administration over its approach to migration and also pilloried Vance, but the account is no longer accessible. Vance was the last world leader to meet with Pope Francis, the day before the Argentine died on April 21 after 12 years as pontiff. Other notable guests expected include Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy - who memorably met Trump in St Peter's Basilica at Francis's funeral - and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz. Peruvian President Dina Boluarte is also on the list provided by the Vatican, along with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Israeli President Isaac Herzog, Colombia's Gustavo Petro and a host of European royals. Italian authorities have deployed thousands of security officers for the event, alongside snipers on rooftops and anti-drone operations. Leo XIV was elected the 267th pope on May 8 after a secret conclave vote of cardinals that lasted less than 24 hours. Succeeding the charismatic but impulsive Francis, he takes over a Church still battling the fallout of the clerical child abuse scandal, and trying to adapt to the modern world. Modernity is not the concern on Sunday, however. Although no pope has been crowned during an inauguration mass since Paul VI in 1963, the event is still a grand affair steeped in tradition.—DNA

Ukraine says Russia launched 'record' drone attack

KYIV, UKRAINE: Ukraine said Sunday that Russia had launched a record number of drones at the country overnight, targeting various regions, including that of the capital Kyiv, where a woman was killed. The attacks came two days after the first direct peace talks between officials from Russia and Ukraine in more than three years, which failed to produce a truce. In his first remarks since the talks, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Sunday that his focus was on eradicating what he called the causes of the Ukraine conflict and guaranteeing Russia's security. The Ukrainian air force said Russia had launched "273 Shahed attack drones and various types of imitator drones", of which 88 were destroyed and 128 more went astray "without negative consequences". Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said it was a "record" number of drones. "Russia has a clear goal - to continue killing civilians," she said. The Russian military said it had intercepted 25 Ukrainian drones overnight and on Sunday morning. In his interview with Russian state TV, Putin said Moscow's aim was to "eliminate the causes that triggered this crisis, create the conditions for a lasting peace and guarantee Russia's security". He said the Russian army, which occupies around 20 percent of Ukraine, had the "troops and means required" to achieve this goal. Friday's talks in Turkey - the first direct Ukraine-Russia encounter since shortly after Russia invaded in February 2022 - led to an agreement to exchange 1,000 prisoners each. Ukraine's top negotiator, Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, said the "next step" would be a meeting between Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Russia said it had taken note of the request. But the Kremlin said the POW swap had to be completed and both sides needed to present their visions for a ceasefire before the next round of negotiations could be arranged.—APP

Sindh CM hosts federal govt- industrial meeting to resolve power issues

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah here on Sunday hosted a forum to bring together federal ministers and industrialists' leadership to discuss the issues of shifting from Captive Power Plants to DISCOs, which, as per the cabinet decision, is mandatory. The meeting decided that all proposals and reservations expressed by the industrialists would be submitted to the Prime Minister for his final decision, a CM House Sindh statement said. It also decided that the Prime Minister would also be requested to constitute a committee to determine the transitional period regarding the imposition of levies. The Chief Minister categorically stated that the gas withdrawn from the Captive Power Plant after the transfer of industrial units to the national grid must remain within the province. The meeting served as a platform for brainstorming sessions between industrialists and federal government representatives to establish a timeline for the transition from their Captive Power Plants to the power distribution companies (DISCOs). The meeting, which held at CM House was attended by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Federal Ministers for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb, Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik, Power Minister Awais Leghari, PM Special Assistant Rana Sanaullah, MNAs Syed Naveed Qamar, Asad Alam, Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, federal and provincial concerned secretaries, MD SSGC, CEO Moonis Alvi, and leading industrialists of the city Zubair Motiwala, Shabir Diwan, Jawed Balwani, and others. The meeting focused on in-depth discussions regarding the proposed increase in the captive power tariff. "There are approximately 660 captive power plants in Sindh," the CM said. "Industrialists have raised concerns over the proposed tariff hike. We have dedicated this Sunday to listening to them," he added. The chief minister expressed gratitude to the federal government for agreeing to hear the concerns of industrialists firsthand. He urged federal ministers to gather input directly from industry stakeholders before making any decisions. Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, while briefing the participants, said, "We are here today at the invitation of the Sindh government to listen to the concerns of industrialists. The country's economy is growing, and this progress includes the efforts of all stakeholders. The Prime Minister has directed us to introduce policies that ensure industrial growth." Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik highlighted that President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have also emphasized the importance of resolving industrial issues in Sindh. He acknowledged CM Murad Ali Shah's efforts and commitment during a previous Zoom meeting with industrialists. Power Minister Awais Leghari informed the meeting that a 30 per cent reduction in industrial tariff has already been implemented. Distribution companies (DISCOs) are improving their operations. A feasibility plan for 7,000 MW of power generation is ready. Leghari said that Industrialists will eventually need to shift from captive power generation to DISCOs/distribution networks. So far, 583 captive power plants have already transitioned to the DISCO grid.—DNA

ZTBL honors Pakistan Armed Forces with nationwide celebrations for victory over India

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a heartfelt tribute to the unparalleled courage and professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces during the recent conflict with India, Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited (ZTBL) hosted a grand cake-cutting ceremony at its head office in Islamabad and illuminated its buildings across the provincial capitals of Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta. The celebrations, held to mark a national day of thanksgiving, resonated with pride and unity as ZTBL's regional offices across Pakistan joined in honoring the armed forces' triumph. The ceremony at ZTBL's head office was led by President and CEO Tahir Yaqub Bhatti, who, alongside senior management, paid homage to the armed forces' valor. The event was filled with patriotic fervor as participants raised resounding slo-

gans, including "Allahu Akbar" and "Pakistan Haider Zindabad," before cutting a ceremonial cake to symbolize national gratitude. The atmosphere reflected deep

admiration for the armed forces' decisive response to India's aggression. In his address, Tahir Yaqub Bhatti lauded the exceptional skill of Pakistan's jet fight-

er pilots, whose professionalism outshone advanced technology. "The recent tensions with India have sparked global discussions, proving that technology is futile

without skilled hands. Our pilots demonstrated unmatched expertise, humbling India's pride and showcasing Pakistan's strength," he remarked. He emphasized that the victory underscored the armed forces' capability to defend the nation on every front, instilling pride in every Pakistani. The participants collectively reaffirmed their unwavering trust in the Pakistan Army, declaring it fully equipped to counter any adversary. "We celebrate this Thanksgiving Day because, with divine support, we defeated a power ten times our size. Absolute power belongs to Allah Almighty alone," they proclaimed, attributing the triumph to both the armed forces' resolve and divine will. The nationwide celebrations and illuminated ZTBL buildings stood as a powerful symbol of Pakistan's unity and gratitude, honoring the armed forces for safeguarding the nation's sovereignty and making every citizen proud.

**Pakistan HC
in Canada
observes
Youn-e-
Tashakur**

DNA

OTTAWA: The High Commission for Pakistan in Canada observed the "Youn-e-Tashakur" to pay tribute to the entire Pakistani nation and the armed forces for their profound national unity and bravery during "Muarka-e-Haq". Members of the Pakistani diaspora and friends of Pakistan attended the event at the High Commission premises in Ottawa. Special prayers were held for the martyrs who laid their lives in defending the motherland, a press release said on Saturday. In his remarks, Pakistan High Commissioner Muhammad Saleem lauded the relentless resolve of the entire nation steered by the country's leadership and valiant armed forces of Pakistan against Indian aggression. Underscoring Pakistan's restraint and measured response, he appreciated the friendly countries who played their role in the de-escalation.—DNA

**UAE to
boost energy
investments in
US to \$440b
by 2035**

DUBAI: The UAE plans to increase the value of its energy investments in the US to \$440 billion in the next decade, it said on Friday, boosting President Donald Trump's efforts to secure major business deals on a Gulf tour. The wealthy oil power's strategy was announced during a presentation by Sultan Al-Jaber, Abu Dhabi oil giant ADNOC's CEO, to Trump during the last stage of his regional trip that has drawn huge financial commitments from the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The enterprise value of UAE investments in the US energy sector will be boosted to \$440 billion by 2035 from \$70 billion now, Al-Jaber told Trump, adding US energy firms will also invest in the UAE. "Our partners have committed new investments worth \$60 billion in upstream oil and gas, as well as new and unconventional opportunities," Al Jaber said in front of a slide showing projects in the UAE under the logos of US companies ExxonMobil, Oxy and EOG Resources. Already in March, when senior UAE officials met Trump, the UAE had committed to a 10-year, \$1.4 trillion investment framework in the US to deepen reciprocal ties. The framework will "substantially increase the UAE's existing investments in the US economy" in AI infrastructure, semiconductors, energy, and manufacturing, the White House said in a statement. "We're making great progress for the \$1.4 trillion that UAE has announced it intends to spend in the United States," Trump said in Abu Dhabi, his last stop on a Gulf tour that has focused on investment deals, not security crises in the Middle East, including Israel's war in Gaza.

**Technological
advancement
vital for eco
growth**

LAHORE, May 18 (AP-P): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik emphasized that in today's rapidly changing global environment, technological advancement is essential not only for military preparedness but also for achieving sustainable economic growth. Talking to a delegation of industrialists, including Convener of the FPCCI Regional Committee on Food Shahid Imran, Coordinator to the Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman, and former FPCCI Vice President Mian Zahid Iqbal, her on Sunday, he said that the widening gap between technologically advanced nations and developing countries poses serious threats to both national security and economic sovereignty. He stressed that investment in research and development (R&D), innovation, and modern industrial practices is critical to staying competitive on the global stage.

Briefs

Indian media
turned into
propaganda
tool: US report

DNA

WASHINGTON: Prominent US newspaper The New York Times has sharply criticised Indian media for its role during the recent Pakistan-India tensions, accusing it of becoming a tool of state propaganda and undermining democratic credibility. The report highlights that Indian news outlets broadcast unverified claims, including repurposed footage of Gaza bombings, falsely presenting them as Pakistani attacks. The article stresses that these reports lacked evidence or independent verification. It also says Indian journalist Rajdeep admitted that the widely circulated report of Pakistani jets being shot down was false.

In a further blow to India's democratic image, the report reveals that the Indian government cracked down on dissent and blocked over 8,000 social media accounts, most of which belonged to Pakistanis. The article notes that the Indian government's actions, along with its media's performance, have raised serious concerns about press freedom and democratic transparency.

Pak exports to
be increased
up to \$60b
in coming
five years

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan said that the government is implementing comprehensive economic policies to take the country's exports to \$60 billion through tariff rationalization. Tariff rationalization plays a significant role in economic governance, and it is planned to take country's export to \$60 billion in the next five years through short, medium and long term economic and trade policies goals, Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal told APP in an exclusive interview here Sunday.

The commerce minister said that tariffs have a pivotal role for promoting trade liberalization, for which, on the instructions of Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the government has formulated a comprehensive tariff policy, which will increase the volume of domestic trade and give Pakistan an opportunity to enter new markets.

Jam Kamal said that the government has planned to increase domestic exports up to \$60 billion in the next five years and Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is giving policy guidelines in this regard.

PDMA issues
red alert for
Punjab as
heatwave
intensifies

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sunday advised the people to take necessary precautions as a severe heat wave is expected to intensify across major cities and plains of Punjab, with temperatures predicted to spike unusually by May 19. Talking to a media news channel, a spokesperson for the PDMA urged the tourists planning to visit Murree to stay informed about weather updates and avoid unnecessary travel during unstable weather conditions. The spokesperson also advised the residents and visitors to remain indoors during severe weather conditions, steer clear of open or vulnerable areas and follow official advisories. The spokesperson cautioned the citizens to stay updated with weather advisories available on media channels and instructed commissioners and deputy commissioners across Punjab to be on high alert due to anticipated heavy rainfall. However, PMD also predicts strong winds and thunder-showers at a few places in Gilgit-Baltistan, Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and adjoining hilly areas in the evening and night. - Agencies

Bilawal Bhutto to lead
peace delegation abroadPM Shehbaz formally tasks PPP chairman to advocate
Pakistan's case globally after Indian aggression

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: Days after a ceasefire following Indian military aggression, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has tasked Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to lead a high-level delegation to key global capitals to present Pakistan's stance and push for peace. Bilawal, whose party is a key ally of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the Centre, accepted the responsibility, confirming his promise to represent the country internationally in testing times.

"I was contacted earlier today by Prime Minister [Shehbaz Sharif], who requested that I lead a delegation to present Pakistan's case for peace on the international stage. I am honoured to accept this responsibility and remain committed to serving Pakistan in these challenging times," he wrote on X. Bilawal to lead peace delegation abroad to expose India's propaganda. According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, PM Shehbaz has decided to dispatch a diplomatic delegation to expose Indian propaganda on the international level. In a telephonic conversation, the premier formally assigned the task to the PPP chairman, appointing him as the head of the delegation. The delegation will include Federal Ministers Dr Musadik Malik, Khurram Dastgir Khan, Sherry Rehman,



and former minister of state Hina Rabbani Khar, according to the official statement. The statement further noted that Senator Faisal Sabzwari, former foreign secretary Tehmina Janjua, and former ambassador to the US and EU Jalil Abbas Jilani will also be part of the delegation. The team is scheduled to visit key capitals including London, Washington, Paris, and Brussels. "The delegation will highlight Pakistan's efforts for regional

peace while exposing India's propaganda and attempts to destabilise peace in the region," it added.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar also confirmed the development, saying that a parliamentary delegation would soon visit the United States, the United Kingdom, Brussels, France, and Russia to highlight Pakistan's stance on the recent conflict. Pakistan armed forces launched a large-scale retaliatory military action, named "Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos", and targeted several Indian military targets across multiple regions.

The strikes, described by officials as "precise and proportionate", were carried out in response to India's continued aggression across the Line of Control (LoC) and within Pakistan's territory, which New Delhi claimed were aimed at "terrorist targets". Pakistan downed six Indian fighter jets, including three Rafale, and dozens of drones. After at least 87 hours, the war, provoked by India, ended on May 10 with a ceasefire agreement brokered by the United States.

According to ISPR, a total of 53 individuals, including 13 personnel of the armed forces and 40 civilians, were martyred in Indian strikes during the recent military confrontation. The military confrontation between the two countries was triggered by last month's attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) that left 26 tourists dead, with India blaming Pakistan for the attack without offering any evidence.

KP faces fresh financial
scam worth Rs16.5bnReport reveals that Accountant
General Offices across KP made
suspicious payments of Rs16.54 bn

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: A fresh report revealed that Accountant General Offices across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) made excess and suspicious payments of Rs16.54 billion from the same Public Works head – G10113 – between 2016 and April 2025. An immediate investigation has been ordered by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) into what is shaping up to be one of the largest financial embezzlements in the province's history, with the total suspected amount touching Rs56.54 billion. In the new scandal, excess funds were withdrawn through collusion of the Communication and Works (C&W), Public Health Engineering and Irrigation departments. The CGA's letter to the Accountant General, KP, states that according to a detailed system-based review of financial data, unusual and excess payments were found to have been made in KP. Under the Public Works head – G10113 – a total debit of Rs163.13 billion was recorded between 2016 and April 2025, while the total credit stood at Rs146.59 billion, resulting in a net excess payment of Rs16.54 billion across 29 districts. The CGA has given the KP Accountant General

just 20 days to complete the inquiry and submit the report. Sources told this correspondent that authorities have ordered for the formation of an investigative committee to determine how these excess payments occurred, identify responsible parties and recommend recovery measures. The initial report uncovered glaring discrepancies across 29 district offices, with some showing hundreds of millions – and in several cases, billions – of rupees in unexplained excess payments. The worst offenders included AG Peshawar Rs3.05 billion excess, AG Swat Rs2 billion, Mardan Rs1.55 billion, Charsadda Rs1.17 billion, Nowshera Rs911 million, Swabi Rs385 million, Dera Ismail Khan Rs600 million, Dir Lower Rs672 million, and AG Bannu recorded overpayments of Rs518.44 million. Similarly, AG Batagram Rs77.78 million, Buner Rs548.58 million, Chitral showed overpayments of Rs551.78 million, Dir Upper Rs464.36 million, and Haripur Rs402.45 million. AG Hangu faced overpayments of Rs479.82 million, Karak Rs280.50 million, and Khyber Rs315.23 million. Overpayments in AG Kohat amounted to Rs520.19 million, Kolai Pallas Kohistan Rs1.52 million and AG Kurram Rs19.64 million. AG Lakki showed overpayments of Rs223.17 million, Malakand Rs498.53 million, Mansehra Rs731.82 million, Miranshah (North Waziristan) recorded Rs22.13 million, Mohmand Rs68.61 million, Shangla Rs346.19 million, Tank reported Rs706.42 million, and AG Torghar closed with overpayments totalling Rs545.81 million.

Gaza rescuers
say children
among 33 killed
in Israeli strikesThe intensified assault comes
as international concern has
mounted over worsening
humanitarian conditions in
Gaza due to an Israeli aid
blockade since March 2

GAZA CITY: Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli air strikes on Sunday killed at least 33 people, more than half of them children, a day after Israel announced an expanded military campaign in the besieged territory. Israel's military has said the expansion of its operations is aimed at "achieving all the war's objectives" including releasing hostages and "the defeat of Hamas". The intensified assault comes as international concern has mounted over worsening humanitarian conditions in Gaza due to an Israeli aid blockade since March 2. Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP on Sunday that 22 people were killed and at least 100 others wounded in a predawn attack on tents sheltering displaced Palestinians in Al-Mawasi, in the southern Gaza Strip. AFP TV footage showed people sifting through the wreck-

age of ruined shelters and rescuers treating the wounded. At a hospital in nearby Khan Yunis city, young men mourned over the shrouded bodies of loved ones laid out on the ground outside. In northern Gaza, Bassal said seven people were killed in a strike on a house in Jabalia, while the Al-Awda hospital in the same area reported damage. Four more deaths were recorded in the central area of Al-Zawayda and in Khan Yunis in the south, according to Bassal. He said that the "series of violent Israeli air strikes" across Gaza overnight and in the early morning resulted in a total of "at least 33 martyrs, more than half of whom were children". There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

The announcement of Israel's stepped-up campaign drew international criticism on Saturday.

UN chief Antonio Guterres, addressing an Arab League summit in Baghdad, said he was "alarmed" at the escalation and called for "a permanent ceasefire, now". The summit's final statement urged the international community "to exert pressure to end the bloodshed". Italy urged Israel to stop the strikes, while Germany said it was "deeply concerned". European Council President Antonio Costa said he was "shocked by the news from Gaza".

Israel resumed its operations in the territory on March 18, ending a two-month truce in the war.

In Tel Aviv, demonstrators took to the streets on Saturday to protest against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government and demand it strike a deal to secure the release of the remaining hostages.

"Instead of bringing them all home by agreeing to the deal that is on the table, Netanyahu is dragging us into a needless political war that will lead to the death of the hostages and soldiers," said protester Zahir Shahar Mor, nephew of slain hostage Avraham Munder.

Of the 251 hostages taken during Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack that triggered the war, 57 remain in Gaza, including 34 the military says are dead.

IMF urges Pakistan to ease
used car import restrictionsWashington-based lender imposes new structural
benchmarks for trade liberalisation in upcoming budget

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has introduced new structural benchmarks for trade liberalisation in the upcoming budget, calling for the elimination of all quantitative restrictions on the commercial import of used motor vehicles under five years old, along with the implementation of a carbon levy of Rs5 per litre. To comply with the structural benchmark until December 2025, the IMF has bound Pakistan to prepare a plan based on the assessment conducted to fully phase out all incentives related to Special Technology Zones and other industrial parks and zones by 2035. Although the IMF staff report on Pakistan does not specifically mention China, banning incentives for SEZs will definitely contain China in the longer term. The IMF made it mandatory to implement the enacted Agriculture Income Tax (AIT) laws through a comprehensive plan, including the establishment of an operational platform for processing returns,

taxpayer identification and registration, a communication campaign, and a compliance improvement plan, adopt legislation to make captive power levy ordinance permanent and notifications of the annual electricity tariff rebasing and gas tariff adjustment from July 1, 2025. In its staff report released on Saturday from Washington DC after the completion of the first review and release of the second tranche under EFF and newly struck Resilience Sustainability Facility (RSF), it was the condition of the IMF to get parliamentary approval for a FY26 budget in line with IMF staff agreement to meet the programme targets. The IMF staff in their appraisal stated that risks remain elevated amidst rising global uncertainty. External risks are increasing, notably from the economic and financial impact of the April 2 US tariff announcements and subsequent market reaction, broader geopolitical tensions, and elevated global economic policy uncertainty, with potential spillovers to (already tight) global financial conditions and commodity prices. "Domestic political economy pressures to unwind and delay reforms remain present and may intensify."

Pakistan
exemplary
response
leaves
India reel in

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM Shehbaz Sharif on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa affairs Ikhtiar Wali Khan Sunday urged all political parties and nation to maintain unity, stating that Pakistan's enemy, India is still in shock after receiving an exemplary response from Pakistan. Ikhtiar Wali Khan while in exclusive conversation with PTV news channel called for unshakeable solidarity among political parties, asserting that India's hostile designs can only be thwarted through unity.

"We have shown our strength, now let's show our unity. Pakistan's future depends on our collective resilience," he added. He said India, despite its massive population and economy has failed on all fronts.

In contrast, Pakistan has set an example, surprising not just India but the entire world with its military capabilities, including drones, Rafales and F-16s, showcasing its strength and ability, he added. The coordinator further said India is facing international isolation and criticism, as Prime Minister Modi's propaganda campaign designed to sway election results and target Pakistan's economy has failed miserably. Ikhtiar Wali Khan also praised Donald Trump's willingness to mediate between India and Pakistan, saying it was an honour for Pakistan to have such a prominent figure take an interest in resolving the longstanding conflict.

Three killed
in Tando
Adam truck
accident

ISLAMABAD, May 18 (APP): At least three people lost their lives in a tragic truck accident on Link Road in Tando Adam, Matiyari, on Sunday morning. According to rescue sources, a truck taking a sharp turn at high speed overturned on Link Road in Tando Adam, killing at least three people on the spot, a private news channel reported. The investigation into the accident is ongoing, with authorities working to determine the exact cause and identify measures to prevent similar incidents. The bodies were transported to the hospital for further examination and identification. - Agencies

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