

SC expresses profound grief  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi, along with all judges of the Supreme Court, on Thursday held a formal condolence session to express profound grief over the martyrdom of innocent Pakistani citizens in a brutal and unprovoked attack by the Indian Army. The judges offered fateha for the departed souls.



@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXII

No. 100

Regd. No. 241

ZIQAAD 11 1446 -- FRIDAY, MAY 09 2025

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

# Pak reserves right to act in self-defence: Shehbaz tells Rubio

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday received a telephone call from US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio and discussed prevailing situation in the region.

During the call, the prime minister conveyed Pakistan's strong condemnation of India's missile and drone strikes that had led to the death of 31 civilians, injured 57 others and damaged civilian infrastructures, according to a press statement issued by the PM House Press Wing. India's attacks had violated Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while gravely jeopardizing peace and stability in the South Asia region, he added.

The prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's firm resolve to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity at all costs. He noted that the people of Pakistan were outraged by India's unprovoked acts of war, and stressed that Pakistan reserved the right to act in self-defence, in accordance with Article-51 of the UN Charter. He also appreciated President Trump's concern over the current security situation in South Asia.

Secretary Rubio noted that the U.S. was closely following the situation in the South Asia as it was committed to promoting peace and stability in the region. To this end, he emphasized upon the need for both



Pakistan and India to work closely to de-escalate the situation. Both sides agreed to remain in touch.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for showing solidarity and support with Pakistan at this "critical time" following the Indian missile strikes in Pakistan.

The prime minister, who received a telephone call from President Erdogan on Wednesday, appreciated the prayers of the Turkish people for the martyrs of Wednesday's heinous missile strikes carried out by India. In a social media post on X, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that during the discussion, he had briefed President Erdogan on the valiant efforts of Pakistan's armed forces, who

repulsed the enemy with their bravery and professional superiority.

"We will protect our sovereignty and territorial integrity at all costs. Pakistan is grateful for Turkish efforts to promote de-escalation and maintain peace in South Asia," he remarked. The Turkish president had condoled the loss of lives of Pakistani citizens caused by Indian missile strikes and assured that Turkiye was ready to play its role as a committed friend of Pakistan.

Reaffirming Turkiye's solidarity with the people of Pakistan, Erdogan said that Turkiye supported de-escalation of the situation and that the Turkish nation was praying for the success of Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives.

## KP CM praises armed forces

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Thursday praised Pakistan's security forces for shooting down the Indian drones and successfully thwarting the enemy's malicious plans. "Our security institutions remain on high alert and are fully capable of giving a crushing response to any aggression," Gandapur stated in a statement issued here.

He accused the Indian government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, of targeting civilian areas for two consecutive days, calling it a "shameful, condemnable act and a grave violation of international law. Gandapur warned that India must cease its hostile actions or be ready to face serious consequences.

"The fascist policies of the Modi regime are not only endangering regional peace but also putting the lives of Indian citizens at risk," he said. The CM emphasized that the nation stands united against such aggression and expressed full confidence in the capability of Pakistan's armed forces to respond decisively. "Our brave military has already forced the enemy to retreat by waving the white flag. We will respond in a way that future generations will remember," he concluded.

## Indian media airs baseless reports

SRINAGAR: Indian media has started broadcasting false reports claiming that Pakistan carried out airstrikes in various parts of Occupied Kashmir and that one aircraft was targeted in response.

According to security sources, these reports are fake and fabricated. The purpose of spreading such false information is to create a misleading impression that Pakistan is also attacking India. Sources stated that by spreading these lies, India is trying to fabricate a continuous false justification for its blatant aggression against Pakistan.

Security sources have made it clear that these reports are entirely baseless and made-up. Earlier, the ISPR DG had said during a media briefing that when Pakistan responds, the impact won't be limited to Indian media—it will echo across the world. He rejected India's claims of Pakistani strikes in 15 areas, including Amritsar, saying India had actually targeted its own installations. — Agencies

## Country's armed forces fully alert: Ishaq Dar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday said that India deliberately targeted Amritsar with projectiles/missiles in a calculated move to incite anti-Pakistan sentiments within the Sikh community.

Speaking at a press conference along with Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Lt General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, Ishaq Dar said India on the early hours of May 8 launched a highly proactive attack, firing four projectiles most probably missiles targeting Pakistani territory. "In a deeply sinister act, three projectiles were deliberately dropped at Amritsar, the capital of Indian Punjab while the fourth projectile which entered Pakistan's airspace was neutralized by Pakistan air defence and its debris fell in Denga which is inside Pakistan," the deputy PM said.

He added that this malicious act of Hindutva regime falsely implicated Pakistan for targeting Indian civilians and inciting anti-Pakistani sentiments among the Punjabi Sikh population to externalize

the rising communal tensions within India. "Pakistan categorically denies any intention or action that endangered civilian populations in Indian Punjab. Unlike the divisive policies of Indian leadership, Pakistan remains firmly committed to safeguarding innocent lives and regional harmony," he added.

Ishaq Dar pointed out that besides firing projectiles, most probably missiles, several armed Indian drones also violated Pakistan's airspace by crossing over the international border at multiple places, targeting civilian, martyring one and injuring four, and made attempts to attack military installation, injuring four Army personnel. "One of these drones also struck the Rawalpindi cricket stadium, a venue for the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) in deliberate attempt to target domestic and foreign cricket players," he added. However, he informed that these drones had been neutralized.

The deputy PM said that despite repeated provocations, Pakistan being a responsible state had so far exercised strategic restraint, acted with maturi-

ty and limited its response strictly to self defence in accordance with International law and the UN charter. "Nonetheless in view of this grave and unlawful aggression and firing projectiles most probably missiles inside its territory and violating its airspace, Pakistan reserves the right to respond to India at a time, place and manner of its choosing," he added.

Calling upon the general public to remain calm in the wake of Indian aggression, Ishaq Dar said that the country's armed forces were fully alert and vigilant to thwart any aggression from India. He said India was resorting to such "shameful" acts out of embarrassment following the downing of five Indian jets by Pakistan's Air Force a day earlier. Today, he said India also issued a politically motivated statement, saying that Pakistan attacked multiple Indian sites, calling it a "big lie". "The act India has done today, across the country, is shameful and condemnable." He said India, in a bid to conceal its embarrassment, narrated a concocted story that it attacked with drones in retaliation of Pakistani attack on India.

## Cardinal elected Pope Leo XIV, first US pontiff

VATICAN CITY (Reuters): Cardinal Robert Prevost was elected in a surprise choice to be the new leader of the Catholic Church on Thursday, taking the name Leo XIV, becoming the first US pontiff. Pope Leo, appeared on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica around 70 minutes after white smoke billowed from a chimney atop the Sistine Chapel, signifying the 133 cardinal electors had chosen a new leader for the 1.4 billion-member Catholic Church.

"Peace be with you all," the new pope told the cheering crowd. The choice of Prevost was announced by French Cardinal Dominique Mamberti with the Latin words "Habemus Papam" (We have a pope) to tens of thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square to hear the news. Aged 69 and originally from Chicago, Prevost has spent most of his career as a missionary in Peru and became a cardinal only in 2023. He has given a few media interviews and rarely speaks in public.

Leo becomes the 267th



Catholic pope after the death last month of Pope Francis, who was the first Latin American pope and had led the Church for 12 years and widely sought to open the staid institution up to the modern world. Francis enacted a range of reforms and allowed debate on divisive issues such as women's ordination and better inclusion of LGBT Catholics.

Ahead of the conclave, some cardinals called for continuity with Francis' vision of greater openness and reform, while others said they wanted to turn back the clock and embrace old traditions. Prevost has attracted interest from his peers because of his quiet style and support for Francis, especially his commitment to social justice issues.

Prevost served as a bishop in Chiclayo, in northwestern Peru, from 2015 to 2023. Francis brought him to Rome that year to head the Vatican office in charge of choosing which priests should serve as Catholic bishops across the globe, meaning he has had a hand in selecting many of the world's bishops. Prevost said during a 2023 Vatican press conference: "Our work is to enlarge the tent and to let everyone know they are welcome inside the Church."

Pope Francis died on April 21 after ruling the 1.4-billion member Church for 12 years. During his reign he sought to open up the staid institution to the modern world, enacting a range of reforms and allowing debate on divisive issues such as women's ordination and LGBT Catholics. While no clear favourites had emerged to succeed him, Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who served as the Vatican's number two under Francis, and Filipino Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle were considered the frontrunners.

# The Frontier Post

Security alert issued  
F.P. Report

LAHORE: The US Consulate General in Lahore on Thursday issued a security alert for its staff and American citizens in the city, urging them to relocate to safer areas following reports of a drone being shot down in the provincial capital, says in media reports. According to the advisory, the Consulate has instructed its personnel to move to secure locations amid concerns that airstrikes could follow the incident.



KARACHI: Security officials inspecting the site and collecting pieces of Indian drone after strike.

## Asif: Pakistan fully prepared to defend sovereignty

ISLAMABAD (APP): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif Thursday warned that Pakistan seeks peace, but will not back down if provoked as we are fully prepared to defend our sovereignty and territorial integrity at all costs.

In a candid interview with CNN channel, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif underscored Pakistan's resolve to protect its sovereignty, stating that the country is fully prepared to respond to any threat or provocation. He further alleged that India is overstepping its boundaries and violating international norms, which has become a major source of contention and a catalyst for conflict in the region. He urged the international community to hold India accountable for its actions, emphasizing the need for collective pressure to address the growing tensions in the region.

In response to a question, Khawaja Asif pointed out that the Indian media itself has acknowledged the crash of three aircraft in Indian-occupied Kashmir. "The Indian actions were deliberate attacks on civilians, resulting in harm to innocent women and children, which flagrantly violates international humanitarian law," he asserted.

Regarding the Pahalgam incident, the Defence Minister renewed Pakistan's demand for a prompt international investigation, calling on the global community to uncover the truth behind the attack in the disputed territory and identify those responsible.

## Airports shut down

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) has temporarily suspended flight operations at four major airports—Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Sialkot citing national security concerns, particularly after the downing of an Indian drone near Lahore early Thursday.

The PAA spokesperson said Lahore, Sialkot, and Karachi airports will remain closed until 12:00 PM today. All the air travellers have been advised to remain in contact with their respective airlines for the latest flight updates. Earlier in the day, the Lahore and Sialkot airspaces were shut down, following a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) issued shortly after security forces shot down a hostile drone near Lahore airport. Authorities expanded the closure to Karachi airport, and subsequently Islamabad International Airport was also affected.

The Islamabad airport closure, however, was attributed to "operational reasons", according to PAA officials. Sialkot International Airport spokesperson Umair Khan confirmed the temporary suspension, stating that all passengers and their families were safely evacuated from the terminal.

## Pakistan army downs 25 Israeli-made drones

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Armed Forces have so far shot down 25 Israeli-manufactured Harop drones using both soft-kill (technical) and hard-kill (weapons-based) systems, following a series of provocative attacks by India.

The escalation follows India's cowardly assault on May 6/7, which resulted in the destruction of five advanced aircraft, drones, multiple military posts, and reported casualties among Indian troops, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release. In a state of panic and confusion, India has resorted to deploying Israeli-made Harop drones for attacks on Pakistani territory.

These unprovoked attacks are a clear reflection of India's desperation and frustration, as it continues to suffer significant losses along the Line of Control (LoC). Debris of the downed Israeli drones is being recovered from various locations across Pakistan. Pakistan's Armed Forces are responding with full force, thwarting all hostile designs and delivering a decisive response to the enemy's aggression.

Meanwhile, Director General Inter Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry on Thursday said that Pakistan's armed forces, maintaining a high level of alert, successfully neutralised 12 Indian Harop drones launched across various locations in a clear act of aggression.

Addressing a press conference, he said, "On the night of May 7th and 8th, India carried out yet another blatant act of military aggression against Pakistan by launching hostile drones at multiple locations. In response, the Pakistan Armed Forces, maintaining the highest state of alert and vigilance, successfully neutralised 12 Harop drones."

The DG ISPR stated the locations where the Indian drones were neutralised

including Lahore, Attock, Gujranwala, Chakwal, Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur, Miano, Chor and Near Karachi. DG Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry also showed debris of neutralised drones.

He said that four personnel of the Pakistan Army have been injured as a 13th Indian drone "managed to engage in a military target near Lahore partially. The DG said "Four men of Pakistan Army have been injured in this attack near Lahore with partial damage to an equipment has occurred."

He said, in an another drone attack one civilian has embraced martyrdom and one is injured in Miano, Sindh. "This naked aggression continues, and the armed forces are on high degree of alert and neutralising them," he said.

He added that the provocation "miserably failed on the night of May 6 and 7, when they attacked places of worship and civilian infrastructure and killed innocent civilians, including children, women and elderly". Recalling that the Indian army faced "destruction of five of their aircraft and suffering heavy casualties along the Line of Control and damage", the DG ISPR said India has "apparently lost the plot".

"Rather than going on a path of rationality, it is further escalating in a highly charged environment to satisfy the hubristic mindset of the Indian government," he said. The DG ISPR said, "The international community can visibly see the path that India is treading through this extremely provocative military aggression in a region that is right now highly fragile and putting the security of the region and beyond at risk. "Pakistan armed forces remain fully vigilant to any type of threat," the DG ISPR added. He said there should be no doubt that India is paying dearly—and will continue to pay dearly—for this naked aggression and reckless military adventurism.

## So far no location targeted in IloJK: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday said Pakistan has so far not targeted any location in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, or across international border, refuting Indian reports of shooting down its fighter jets.

"Pakistan has not targeted any locations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, or across international border, so far. Neither has any loss been incurred by PAF," the minister said in a post on X formerly Twitter. Pakistan has only given "defensive response" so far, he said urging the international community to take note to this end. "Indian media is always spreading disinformation either to create or craft a (fake) notion of success before publicly accepting their embarrassing losses during their unprovoked aggression on night of 6/7 May 2025," the minister stressed.

Earlier, speaking in the National Assembly, Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said that the message of unity and harmony given inside the Parliament has set a high example of Pakistan's democratic traditions and patriotic spirit. He said "I thank my colleagues sitting on the opposition benches and salute their passion. The world has received a clear message: the entire nation is united and stands shoulder-to-shoulder with our armed forces to defeat Indian aggression." The minister said that the cowardly enemy attacked under the cover of darkness, using its so-called superior technology, including their prized Rafale jets - which they claimed were unmatched in the world. They were proud of these jets and believed they could cause irreparable damage to Pakistan. "But our brave Pakistani falcons (pilots) made them bite the dust."

He added that India's arrogance has been humbled by Allah's will. Their intentions to harm Pakistan were met with disgrace, forcing them to change their strategy after this embarrassment, he maintained. Pakistan's armed forces responded immediately, he said. "The downed jets are not just aircraft—they represent the fall of India's pride, their arrogance, and their military's morale."

The minister said that whenever Pakistan faces such challenges, the nation comes together as one. "When five fingers unite into a fist, they strike with such force that the enemy dares not attack again." Commenting on India's Rafale jets, he joked, "Even the Rafale company must

be questioning India: 'You've ruined our reputation!'"

The minister praised Pakistan's JF-17 Thunder jets and the brave pilots, saying, "We salute our heroes from this house. Last time, we served them tea; this time, we were ready to throw a party for them!" He said the downing of Rafale jets within the conventional warfare has firmly established Pakistan's air superiority, demonstrating that its capabilities far surpass India's. Historical evidence from conventional warfare is replete with examples where Pakistan has decisively defeated India, shattering its morale.

He further said when these jets were shot down, India's confidence collapsed, leaving them unable to regroup. Desperate to erase this humiliation, India has resorted to extreme measures—even sending unmanned drones after its pilots refused to fly, fearing certain death. Tarar said that India once boasted about its superior technology, but the reality is that victory in the skies depends not just on aircraft but on the courage of the pilots flying them. Now, faced with cowardice and fear, India has shifted its strategy, deploying unmanned Rafale drones instead.

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## Tessori call on Punjab Governor



F.P. Report

LAHORE: Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore. During the meeting, both leaders paid tribute to the Pakistan Army for giving a befitting reply to the Indian aggression. The meeting also discussed the situation that emerged after the Indian attack.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that all political parties are united for the integrity of the country. He said that the entire nation is standing with the Pakistan Army like a lead wall. The Governor Punjab said that India targeted unarmed civilians in the darkness of the night. He said that innocent children, women and men were martyred in the Indian attack. The Governor Punjab said that India is the biggest terrorist country in the world. He said that Indian aggression is a serious threat to peace in the region. The Governor Punjab said that Pakistan wants peace in the region but India should not misconstrue it as Pakistan's weakness. He said that the

entire nation is united like a clenched fist to protect the country.

In addition, Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has strongly condemned the drone attacks on civilians by India. He paid tribute to the Pakistan Army for timely intercepting the drones. The Governor of Punjab said that the Pakistani forces have shot down all the drones and thwarted the enemy's intentions. He said that the drone attacks on innocent children and women in the dark of night are deplorable. He commended the Pakistan Army's ability to effectively address the prevailing challenges. Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that he stands with every soldier of the Pakistan Army. The Governor of Punjab said that India's cowardly attacks cannot demoralize the nation. He expressed deep sorrow and regret over the martyrdom of a civilian in the Jabi area of Fatah Jang in the drone attack. The Governor of Punjab also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the drone attacks.

Meanwhile, the Governor of Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, along with

his family, attended the parade at Wagah Border and challenged India. He praised the performance of the Chief of Army Staff General Syed Hafiz Asim Munir and the pilots of the Pakistan Air Force.

Governor Kamran Khan Tessori arrived at the Wagah Border with his family, where he watched the parade. During the event, he boosted the morale of the troops and applauded their performance.

After the parade, the Governor spoke to the media, commending the Chief of Army Staff General Syed Hafiz Asim Munir for responding to India. He also praised the pilots of the Pakistan Air Force for shooting down Indian aircraft.

The Governor remarked that the public participation at the Indian parade was minimal, whereas the enthusiasm of the Pakistani people was double. He mentioned Pakistan's diplomatic success and stated that Pakistan is ready for independent investigations. Kamran Khan Tessori further stated that the Pakistan Army advocates for peace, and a new era of challenges has begun for India.

## Sindh govt decides to crack down on outlets

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Bureau of Supply Prices Department, Government of Sindh, has announced action against restaurants, shopping malls, coffee shops, and biryani centers that do not accept payments via debit/credit cards.

The Sindh Consumer Protection Authority has issued notices to well-known restaurants in Clifton, including Karachi Broast, Frontier, Baithak, Nihari Inn, and Desi Dera.

These establishments have been notified for violating the Sindh Consumer Protection Act 2014, and formal proceedings have begun. Director General Zahid Hussain Sher stated that strict legal action will be taken against such restaurants across the province, including Karachi, that do not provide the facility of payment through debit or credit cards.

The Sindh government has taken notice of this issue following public complaints. According to DG Zahid Hussain Sher, appropriate legal action will be taken against this violation, and inquiries have been initiated to provide relief to consumers.

Assistant Director Mir Shah Nawaz has directed the concerned businesses to immediately cease this violation. Restaurant owners are instructed to personally or through their representatives respond to the notice at the authority's office.

The Sindh government has clarified that it is the responsibility of businesses to provide various payment methods to consumers, and any negligence in this regard will not be tolerated. Zahid Hussain Sher emphasized that the protection of consumer rights will be ensured.

## Action against plastic bags directed

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Secretary of Environment, Agha Shah Nawaz, has directed the plastic bag industries to adopt alternatives or prepare for a crackdown. A meeting was held to discuss the implementation of a complete ban, which included Director General SEPA Waqar Hussain Phulpoto and Director Natural Resources Imran Sabir.

Agha Shah Nawaz appealed for cooperation from all stakeholders. He stated that the police, DCs, mayors, and other institutions are fully on board, and any violation of the law will not be tolerated. The police will be instructed to clarify the distinctions between different types of shoppers, and committees will be formed at the district level.

The industrial delegation expressed concern that it might not be possible to clear stock within two months, which could harm the industries. They also emphasized the need for the police to clarify the distinctions between types of shoppers.

Agha Shah Nawaz announced that no leniency will be given after June 15, and the crackdown will begin with major markets. He further stated that industries will be visited next week for further consultation. The Secretary of Environment made it clear that breaking the law will not be allowed, but industries will be facilitated within the scope of the regulations.

## Resolution against India

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Opposition Leader in the Sindh Assembly, Ali Khurshidi, has submitted a resolution against the Indian airspace violation.

Assembly members Najm Mirza, Anil Kumar, and Muhammad Daniyal also supported the resolution. The resolution condemns India's cowardly action as a blatant violation of international laws.

Khurshidi stated that Pakistan is a peaceful country but maintains the right to defend itself. He further emphasized that there can be no compromise on Pakistan's defense.

## Entire nation stands firmly with armed forces: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that during the evening of May 6-7, India demonstrated hostility towards Pakistan in an illegal, irresponsible manner and in an open violation of international norms in response to an unsubstantiated accusation of terrorism. He said that the whole world knows the decades-long struggle for freedom in Kashmir, and that India has always used such means to crush the movement.

Speaking at an emergency press conference in Karachi, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon said that India blamed Pakistan for the Pahalgam incident without carrying out even a single investigation or producing evidence. He added that India also rejected Pakistan's offer for an impartial inquiry, which clearly indicates that India had already planned to carry out aggression based on pre-meditated accusations.

He stated that Pakistan acted responsibly and decisively in self-defense, successfully shooting down Indian Air Force aircraft and killing three pilots. This operation marked an unprecedented achievement against the enemy's advanced technology and is being widely acknowledged around the world. He added that, in retaliatory actions, Pakistan targeted key military installations across the Line of Control, resulting in the deaths of 40 to 50 Indian soldiers.

Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that India has a history of concealing its failures, citing the example of awarding the Vir Chakra to Abhinandan, the pilot of a downed aircraft. He said that on the night of May 7 and 8, India escalated tensions by targeting three types of objectives. First, attacks were carried out against the Sikh community and their religious sites within India to instill fear among Sikhs. Second, these attacks were falsely attributed to Pakistan in an attempt to spread hatred. Third, India aimed to create a false impression of



victory by presenting the wreckage from these attacks as evidence of downed Pakistani aircraft.

He added that the second target was Pakistan's defense installations, aimed at weakening the country's defensive and offensive capabilities. The third target was the civilian population, intended to spread fear and despair among the Pakistani people. However, Pakistan once again responded effectively with a well-executed defense strategy, successfully shooting down 25 Israeli-made Harop drones across the country.

He further stated that while flying drones is relatively easy, shooting them down requires exceptional skill—an achievement that reflects the professionalism of Pakistan's armed forces. He added that Pakistan not only downed Indian aircraft but also successfully targeted their military check posts. Sharjeel Inam Memon claimed that the Modi government procured the planes with corrupt means, a truth accepted by opposition parties in India itself.

He stated that India has responded in two weeks to an attack on Pakistan after the Pahalgam affair, but reaffirmed that the timing and area of

Pakistani reaction will be established by itself based on its will and the aspiration of the people.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the entire nation stands firmly with the Pakistani armed forces. He emphasized that mothers, sisters, elders, and youth are united in their resolve that India will be defeated at all costs. He further remarked that Modi is mentally unstable and possesses a criminal and extremist mindset.

Sharjeel Inam Memon, expressing solidarity with the Kashmiri people's freedom struggle, stated that Pakistan stands with the people of Kashmir under all circumstances. He called for an immediate end to the ongoing atrocities against Muslims and Sikhs in India and warned that India has yet to realize the extent of the damage it is about to incur. He stated that Pakistan is a nuclear power and has every right to defend itself. Innocent children and civilians have been martyred in Indian attacks, and the blood of these martyrs will certainly be avenged. He further mentioned that the Sindh government is closely monitoring the entire situation and is fully prepared to address any potential threat.

## Thalassemia awareness, prevention emphasized by Sindh CM

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah emphasized the importance of thalassemia awareness on World Thalassemia Day. He highlighted that thalassemia is a hereditary disease affecting entire families and encouraged the public to donate blood to help those with the condition.

The Chief Minister underlined the need for public awareness to prevent thalassemia, stating that safeguarding the younger generation is a priority for the Sindh government. He reiterated the government's dedication to comprehensive health sector reforms. Modern medical facilities are being made available for thalassemia treatment, Shah noted. He reported that, according to the Sindh Blood Transfusion Authority, 9,525 patients, mainly children, are registered at 26 centers.

The Sindh government has established free diagnostic desks for thalassemia and hepatitis at two

NADRA centers in Korangi and Saifan. Shah also spoke about ongoing efforts to encourage pre-marital screening and the spread of information through awareness campaigns, educational institutions, media, and community programs.

Syed Murad Ali Shah stressed the need for more effective thalassemia prevention measures. He suggested that a premier screening program could reduce the disease's prevalence and emphasized the crucial roles of parents, teachers, and religious scholars in fighting thalassemia. The Chief Minister concluded by announcing plans to enhance awareness campaigns against thalassemia, aiming for increased community engagement and education.

**Boxer Alia Soomro meets Sindh Chief Minister:** Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, met with Pakistani boxer Alia Soomro, who recently won the World Boxing Title, to congratulate her on her suc-

cess. The Chief Minister announced a reward of 1 million rupees for Alia and stated that if she needs a coach, the Sindh government will arrange for it.

The meeting was also attended by Provincial Minister Ali Hassan Zardari, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, Principal Secretary Agha Wasif, and MPAs Shazia Karim and Muhammad Yousef Baloch. The Chief Minister advised Alia to prepare for the Asian Games and assured her that the government stands by her as she continues to work hard.

Alia Soomro, who hails from Lyari, is the first Pakistani woman to win a World Boxing Title. She is currently training in Thailand. According to the spokesperson of the Chief Minister of Sindh, she will face an Indian boxer in Dubai in two months. Syed Murad Ali Shah stated that Alia has brought international recognition to Pakistan, and they are proud of her. He assured that the Sindh government will fully support her.

## Punjab on high alert: Security increased

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Usman Anwar has directed law enforcement agencies to increase security across the province, including the capital city of Lahore, amid the ongoing tense situation in the country.

In an official statement on Thursday, IGP Anwar confirmed that Punjab Police is on high alert, and all operational, strategic, and logistical preparations are fully in place to tackle any potential emergency. "The Punjab Police stands fully prepared to ensure peace, public safety, and immediate response in case of any untoward incident," he said. "We are closely

monitoring the situation and remain ready to respond swiftly to any challenge."

The IGP further emphasized that Punjab Police is working in close coordination with the district administration, Civil Defense, and Rescue 1122 to maintain law and order and conduct relief operations if required. Security measures have also been intensified at all important and sensitive locations, including inter-provincial border police posts, to deter any threat and ensure the safety of citizens.

These instructions come in the wake of a Indian spy drone being shot down in the Walton area of Lahore on Thursday morning. A series of loud explosions

was heard on Walton Road in Lahore on Thursday morning, police officials claimed. Multiple blasts were heard on Walton Road in the Gopal Nagar and Naseerabad areas of Lahore near Walton Airport. People ran out of their houses in panic and reported seeing clouds of smoke. Police sources said an Indian drone was shot down near Walton Airport. They said the drone measuring 5 to 6 feet was being operated from across the border. The drone was shot down by jamming the system, the sources added. The Indian drone was flown to spy on sensitive places, the sources further said, adding that the drone carrying explosives had reached very close to the building.

## SIUT launches PET diagnostic treatment for cancer

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The SIUT (Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation) has made another breakthrough for treatment of cancer patients by introducing a state of the art diagnosis technology known as PET/CT in the interior of Sindh province.

The technology is known for bringing a significant impact on the treatment of cancer, as it enables the physicians to obtain more accurate pictures and help them in carrying out and monitoring the ailment in a more effective manner. According to SIUT sources who said the doctors engaged with the introduction of in the new technology are in a better position to visualize the metabolic activity in the human body which helps them in checking any

adverse growth.

The installation of PET/CT is another testament of the SIUT towards its commitment to bring modern medical technologies and expertise to the region particularly far flung area.

Experts opined that facility will go a long way for the population of interior Sindh where population who have fallen victims of cancer often had to travel long distances to avail the facility. Availability of the new facility at their door step has opened new vistas of comfort and removed economic burden as all the treatment which is provided in SIUT is free of cost. The destination of the revolutionary facility is Sukkur where SIUT since its inception is running a comprehensive network of medical care in a wide ranging field

including urology, nephrology and oncology.

A press release of the Institute released today said the facility which offers wide range of services is all equipped with modern technology, team of well trained staff and experienced medical manpower. The project started in 2017 and completed at a cost of approximately 1.5 billion rupees. The release aid the introduction of PET/CT is also aimed towards empowering the population to avail the facilities of cancer care besides empowering the patients to receive timely and effective treatment. The release further said the introduction of PET/CT in Sukkur is all poised to revolutionize care of cancer in the region besides empowering them to take timely and early facilities of treatment.

## Light rain brings relief to Lahoris

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Light rain continued in various parts of the provincial capital on Thursday turning the city's weather pleasant while prompting the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) to remain on high alert.

According to the Meteoro-

logical Department, highest recorded rainfall so far was two millimetres in Paniwala Talab, while Gulberg, Upper Mall, and Tajpura each received one millimetre of rain.

The scattered showers provided much-needed respite to citizens from the rising temperatures and humid conditions that had gripped the city

over the past week. In view of the weather conditions, WASA officials issued instructions to ensure all disposal stations remain functional. Vice Chairman WASA directed field staff to keep pumping stations operational round the clock, particularly in low-lying areas vulnerable to water accumulation.

## HRCP urges de-escalation between Pakistan & India

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) called for urgent de-escalation of tensions between Pakistan and India following its biannual meeting.

The commission highlighted the reported casualties, including women and children, due to Indian air strikes, as serious violations of international human rights law, potentially amounting to crimes against humanity.

The HRCP emphasized the need for dialogue and

peaceful coexistence, condemning all forms of violent extremism and the use of religion as a weapon on both sides. It warned that armed conflict between the nuclear-armed neighbors threatens regional stability and endangers the rights of over a billion people. The organization expressed concerns that such a climate allows for increased suppression and security measures, undermining democratic principles and accountability. HRCP also urged the media to uphold integrity

and avoid spreading harmful narratives.

Domestically, the HRCP voiced its worries over the lack of accountability in the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances and called for the establishment of a credible body to hold perpetrators accountable.

It appealed for measures to address political tensions, restore student unions, uphold Afghan refugees' rights, and protect indigenous communities from land appropriation.

## Solidarity rally with Pakistan Army held

F.P. Report

LAHORE: A rally was held at Punjab University under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Ali to express solidarity with the Pakistan Army, in which strong condemnation of Indian aggression was voiced. A large number of teachers, staff, students, and school children participated in the rally.

Addressing the rally, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ali paid tribute to the Pakistan Army for giving a fitting response to Indian aggression. He stated that the Pakistani nation is united and ready to face any threat. President of the Acad-

emic Staff Association, Dr. Amjad Abbas Magasi, said that India always resorts to underhanded tactics under the cover of darkness, but we appreciate the sacrifices of the Pakistan Army and are ready to counter Indian aggression on every platform.

In his address, Dr. Muhammad Islam said that the enemy does not realize which nation it has challenged. He further stated that we know well how to defend ourselves and India should wait for our turn. The participants of the rally chanted slogans in favor of the Pakistan Army and against Indian aggression, expressing their patriotic spirit.

## Aafia movement flays Indian aggression

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Aafia Movement, led by renowned neurologist Dr. Fouzia Siddiqui, has strongly condemned Indian aggression, emphasizing the desire for peace among the Pakistani people. Dr. Siddiqui stated that while the nation seeks peace, the defense of the homeland and its dignity will be upheld to the last breath and drop of blood.

She highlighted that Indian aggressive actions towards Pakistan have underscored the necessity for national defense. The Aafia Movement is committed to fostering national unity alongside its usual activities.

Dr. Siddiqui reminded everyone that the return of Dr. Aafia, a daughter of the nation, is as significant as the protection of the homeland.

### NOTICE TO MCB BANK CUSTOMERS

All customers are informed that our MCB Bank Ltd. Mattani Branch (0311), currently located at Khasra No. 3017, Khata No. 1033/3443, Village Mattani, Tehsil & District Peshawar will be temporarily shifted on **13-06-2025** at the following address due to reconstruction of building.

MCB Bank Limited  
Kohat Road Peshawar Branch (0962)  
Khata No. 373/623, Khasra No. 211, 214,  
Main Kohat Road, Peshawar,  
Tehsil & District Peshawar.

Contact No. 091-2626144, 2323796, 2323077  
Cell No. 0326-8280311

Letters for the same have been dispatched to all account holders.







# Qasim inaugurates Child Protection Unit

Highlights KP's leading role in child welfare

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education, and Women Empowerment, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, visited Batagram where he received a warm welcome from the district administration and officers of the Child Protection Unit (CPU).

During his visit, Minister Qasim Ali Shah formally inaugurated the Child Protection Unit in the district. The event was attended by Members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Taj Muhammad Khan Tarand and Samiullah Khan, Deputy Commissioner Batagram Asif Ali Khan, District Police Officer, Additional Secretary Umra Khan,

Chief Child Protection Officer Ejaz Muhammad Khan, UNICEF's Child Protection Specialist Sohail Ahmed, and representatives from other relevant organizations.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has become the first province in Pakistan to introduce a comprehensive and integrated child protection system.

Under this initiative, a provincial focal point has been established under the leadership of the Social Welfare Minister. Child Protection Units are now operational in 19 districts, with District Child Protection Committees led by Deputy Commissioners and community-based child protection committees working actively at the grassroots level.

Speaking at the ceremony,

ny, Chief Child Protection Officer Ejaz Muhammad Khan shared that Child Protection Units have now been established in 21 districts, with plans to expand to the remaining districts soon.

He revealed that the commission has so far provided services to over 34,086 children who were victims of abuse or exploitation.

Addressing the attendees, Minister Qasim Ali Shah emphasized the provincial government's unwavering commitment to child protection, the safeguarding of children's rights, and ensuring a secure future for them.

He stated that the establishment of the CPU in Batagram is a clear reflection of this commitment. He added that the unit will

play a vital role in preventing abuse, violence, and injustice against children, and serve as a coordination hub among all relevant institutions.

The minister appreciated the joint efforts of the district administration, Social Welfare Department, UNICEF, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection Commission.

He expressed hope that the CPU would lay the foundation for a safer and brighter future for children in Batagram and beyond. On this occasion, he also announced that the provincial government will increase the grant-in-aid budget for the Child Protection Commission to facilitate the establishment of more CPUs across other districts.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Local Bodies and Rural Development inaugurating solar lights in Regi Model Town Park.

# CS chairs key meeting on Urban Policy and Building Control

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shahab Ali Shah presided over a high-level review meeting on urban policy and building control, focusing on strengthening the role of the Urban Policy and Planning Unit (UPPU) and the Land Use and Building Control Authority (LUBCA) in effective city planning across the province.



The meeting reviewed the progress on master planning initiatives for urban centers as well as tourist destinations and discussed measures to operationalize the Land Use and Building Control Authority at the earliest.

Key proposals were presented to modernize urban planning in line with contemporary needs through institutional frameworks like the UPPU and LUBCA. The Chief Secretary emphasized the importance of aligning urban development with approved master plans and

urged officials to prioritize strategic planning in developmental projects.

Senior officials including Secretary Planning and Development, Special Secretary Local Government, Executive Director Urban Policy Unit, Director General Building Control Authority, and other high-ranking representatives attended the meeting.

It was decided that the Building Control Authority would be made fully functional without delay. The Chief Secretary directed the

concerned departments to provide all necessary resources to activate the authority and enhance urban planning effectiveness across the province.

The meeting was informed that master plans for various cities and regions have already been completed. Work is also underway on master planning for identified tourist hotspots in both settled and merged districts.

Areas of tourism significance such as water reservoirs, dams, and riverfronts are being integrated into the

planning process.

Key sites include Tanda Dam, Ghandiali Dam, Chashma, Baran Dam, Warsak, Darband, Malakand Hydel Project Stream, and riverbanks along the Indus, Swat, Kabul, and Siran Rivers.

Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah stressed the need to incorporate modern planning principles and future needs in the functionality of the Building Control Authority, ensuring sustainable and regulated urban development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

# Awareness, action urged on Thalassemia Day in KP



## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the occasion of World Thalassemia Day, health professionals, government officials, and civil society leaders gathered in Peshawar to call for urgent and united action to prevent the spread of thalassemia, a life-threatening genetic blood disorder.

The event, hosted by Alkhidmat Hospital in Nishtarabad, featured a public awareness walk and a seminar aimed at educating

ing people about the disease and its prevention.

Speaking at the seminar, Provincial Information Adviser Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif emphasized the importance of a joint effort involving the government, religious scholars, political parties, media, and civil society. "The only effective way to stop thalassemia from spreading is through awareness and prevention," he said. "This is not just a health issue-it is a collective social

responsibility."

Barrister Saif announced that the provincial government is including thalassemia treatment in its Sehat Insaf Card program, which provides free healthcare to residents. He added that awareness campaigns through mosques, media, and community platforms are a top priority.

Alkhidmat's provincial president, Khalid Waqas, Major General (Retired) Abid Latif, Director

Alkhidmat Hajra Hamza Foundation and Alkhidmat provincial vice president, Fida Muhammad Khan also addressed the gathering. They explained that thalassemia is passed from parents to children and that there is currently no permanent cure except bone marrow transplant, which is expensive and rare.

Speakers urged enforcement of existing laws requiring couples to undergo thalassemia testing before marriage. "This law was passed during the MMA government, but it needs real enforcement to save future generations," said Dr. Naveed Sharif, another speaker at the seminar.

According to health experts, an estimated 5,000 new thalassemia cases are reported every year in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Consanguineous marriages, especially between cousins, remain one of the major contributing factors to the spread of the disease.

# Solidarity walk held in support of Pakistan armed forces at ICS



## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A spirited walk was organized at Islamia Collegiate School, Peshawar, to express solidarity with the Pakistan Armed Forces. The walk was led by Principal Sikandar Khan and witnessed enthusiastic participation from teachers, students, and administrative staff, all displaying strong patriotic fervor.

During the walk, passionate slogans such as "Long Live Pakistan Army" and "Down with India" echoed through the air. Students

held banners and placards inscribed with messages of love and support for the armed forces. Many students wore army uniforms and carried symbolic weapons to express their devotion and unity with the military.

At the end of the walk,

Principal Sikandar Khan addressed the participants and highlighted key events from the 1965 war, which further stirred the emotions of the attendees. The program concluded with the powerful chant of "Takbeer, Allahu Akbar."

Meanwhile, a separate event was held in the girls' section under the leadership of Unit Head Ms. Riffat Naz, where female students also participated enthusiastically in showing solidarity with the armed forces.

This walk affirmed that the Pakistani nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its military and deeply values their sacrifices.



# PHC declares BISE Kohat official transfer null & void

## Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Naem Anwar and Justice Kamran Hayat has declared transfer of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Kohat Controller null and void, on Thursday.

The counsel Khalid Rahman advocate argued that the transfer of the peti-

tioner Malik Maqsood Anwar, was unjustified. The lawyer informed the court that the annual matriculation exams have been completed, and FA/F. Sc exams are about to start, with over 100,000 students participating.

The counsel further argued that the petitioner is BPS-18 Professor in Higher Education Department and appointed as Controller BISE Kohat

for three years on 8th June 2022.

The Additional Advocate General argued that all actions were taken in accordance with the law, and the provincial government has the authority to transfer any government official on deputation. The court has set aside the transfer of the Controller of Examinations and the appointment of the new Controller.

# UNICEF Pakistan team meets Ihtisham Ali

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The UNICEF Pakistan team, led by Dr. Gunter Boussery, Chief of Health, UNICEF Pakistan, met with Adviser to the Chief Minister on Health, Ihtisham Ali Khan here in Peshawar on Thursday. Dr. Gunter was accompanied by Dr. Safina Abdullah, UNICEF Pakistan Health Manager, and Dr. Inamullah Khan, UNICEF Health Team Lead for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Ihtisham Ali Khan welcomed the UNICEF team and briefed them on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's health initiatives, appreciating UNICEF's lasting partnership and strong coordination with the KP Health Department in areas such as health system strengthening, maternal and child health, immunization, and emergency response.

The UNICEF team appreciated the government's support and efforts in strengthening primary healthcare, particularly the plans for enhancing the Lady Health Workers (LHWs) program. The Adviser on Health shared that there had been a 57% increase in KP government revenue from taxes, enabling the launch of new health initiatives.

Dr. Gunter suggested exploring domestic resource mobilization for LHWs' operational costs and newborn care initiatives, leveraging the fiscal space created by the increased revenue.

Dr. Gunter suggested exploring domestic resource mobilization for LHWs' operational costs and newborn care initiatives, leveraging the fiscal space created by the increased revenue.

The UNICEF team also met with Director General Health Services, Dr. Mohammad Saleem, at his office.

# Ulema flay Indian aggression

PESHAWAR (APP): A large protest rally was carried out in the provincial capital under the leadership of religious scholars to condemn recent acts of Indian aggression here on Thursday.

The rally, organized by the International Research Council for Religious Affairs, took place in front of the Peshawar Press Club and witnessed significant participation from scholars across various schools of thought, civil society members, journalists, and the general public.

A joint declaration was issued by the rally participants, strongly condemning India's unprovoked nighttime aggression, labeling it a grave violation of international laws. The declaration denounced the targeting of innocent civilians and mosques by Indian forces, calling it a cowardly and shameful act. The statement further highlighted that the killing of innocent people is a heinous crime under any legal framework and has exposed India's malicious intentions and irresponsible behavior in the region. Participants vocally opposed India's illegal occupation of Kashmir and the severe human rights abuses occurring there, urging international organizations to hold India accountable for such illegal acts.

in critical reviews of service delivery, discussed clinical and logistical challenges, and proposed practical strategies for strengthening clubfoot care. Topics ranged from the availability of tenotomy supplies and staff training, to the rollout of digital health tools like Engage-All and Link-All. The session concluded with joint recommendations to guide future planning and budgeting for FY2026.

In the afternoon, the focus turned to external stakeholders-government departments, NGOs, and development agencies-who were briefed on the current program status, achievements, and urgent needs for sustainability.

"This is not just a health discussion; it's a movement toward a future where no child in KP lives with a preventable disability," said Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas, Director Clubfoot Program & CEO Paraplegic Center Peshawar. "Our collective resolve today will shape

tomorrow's inclusive health systems", he added.

Faisal Imtiaz, Program Field Officer for South Asia at MiracleFeet, emphasized the broader regional impact: "Pakistan has made tremendous strides in clubfoot care, and KP stands as a model of integration and innovation. Sustainability now depends on embedding these services fully into government systems."

Dr. Amir Zeb, Director Rehabilitation at PCP and Program Coordinator, highlighted the significance of shared learning: "Every clinic's voice today was vital. From clinical gaps to community outreach, this meeting allowed us to align our vision and goals for the future", he maintained.

The meeting ended with a reaffirmed commitment from all participants to expand access to early intervention for children born with clubfoot-a treatable congenital condition affecting thousands annually in Pakistan.

# National Online Essay Writing Competition to be held

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Millennium School Charsadda has announced the final deadline and cash prizes along with appreciation certificates for the position holders of the National Online Essay Writing Competition 2025. According to details, the school has organized the English national-level online essay competition to encourage young thinkers to present their perspectives on various issues and to promote positive writing skills among them. The last date to participate in the competition is June 1, 2025, while registrations will begin from May 9. Students from different age groups, classes, grades, and categories across Pakistan can participate in this online English essay writing competition. Participants must be between the ages of 12 and 18, and currently enrolled in grades 7, 8, 9, 10, or 1st/2nd year of college. There is no entry fee to participate. The first prize winner will receive a cash prize of PKR 20,000, the second prize winner will get PKR 15,000, and the third prize winner will receive PKR 10,000, along with commendation certificates for all position holders. For further details, participants can contact the school via email at Essay.PMS2007@gmail.com or reach out through the WhatsApp helpline at +92 314 1514414.





## In brief

### Dead body recovered Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Rescue 1122 divers recovered unidentified dead body from the Kabul River near the Surkh Bridge in Nowshera, on Thursday. The body was badly decomposed, and the face was disfigured, making it difficult to identify. The Rescue 1122 team transferred the body to the District Headquarters Hospital in the presence of Nowshera police for post-mortem examination. The body has been temporarily buried. The competent authorities started efforts to identify the deceased and determine the circumstances surrounding the death.

### Two Afghan kids swept away F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Two Afghan children were swept away in a rainwater drain in Kala Pul area along Murree Road in Abbottabad on Thursday. According to rescue sources, emergency teams were immediately dispatched to the site upon receiving the report. Rescue 1122 teams succeeded in saving one child, while search for the second child was ongoing. Both children are reported to be Afghan nationals, aged between 10 and 12 years. District Emergency Officer Jan Muhammad Afridi has issued directives to utilize all available resources in the ongoing rescue operation.

### Admn finalizes arrangements F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock Iftikhar Raza on Thursday while reviewing the overall plan strategy of the health department to make the inter provincial bordering district ATTOCK polio and dengue free zone of the Punjab. The Chief Executive Officer Health Authority Dr Asad Ismail during his briefing session has told that the anti-polio vaccine drops will be administered to more than three lacs children aging upto five years from May 26 which will be continued till May 30, 2025 without any break. The meeting was also attended by the Assistant Commissioners of all tehsils, head of various departments and representatives of World Health Organization. The participants were told that well trained staff will be deployed to administer anti polio drops to the children at their door steps besides all entrance and exit points of the district amid tight security. On this occasion Rao Atif Raza directed the relevant authorities to make sure their full cooperation and coordination during the entire exercise. Meanwhile, Additional Deputy Commissioner Aneel Saeed also chaired the meeting of anti-dengue fever program and advised the health department to implement their plan in it's true spirit. The meeting was also briefed by the Entomologist Shafique Mughal.

### Advisor to AJK govt visits CMH F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Ms. Nisara Abbasi, Advisor to the Government of Azad Kashmir for Services and General Administration, visited CMH last night to meet the individuals injured in the cowardly Indian attack in the Shawai area of the capital, Muzaffarabad. After visiting the victims, Nisara Abbasi toured the affected area and praised the morale of the public and the Pakistan Army.

# Sanam Dam to bring agricultural revolution in Dir

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Provincial Minister for Irrigation, Aqibullah Khan, has vowed to stand shoulder to shoulder with the government and security forces against Indian aggression, setting aside all political differences and grievances.

The minister expressed these views during a visit to the under-construction Sanam Dam project in Asbanr, accompanied by Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Prisons Humayun Khan and Chairman of the District Development Advisory Committee Lower Dir, MPA Ubaidur Rehman, here on Thursday.

During the visit, the project director and Chief Engineer of Northern KP Irrigation, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, briefed the delegation on the progress of the dam. According to officials, 76 percent of the work has been completed, and the project is expected to be fully operational by December 2025—well ahead of its original 2026 target.

Speaking to the media, Minister Aqibullah Khan said that the completion of Sanam Dam would trigger an agricultural revolution in the Adenzai area, creating employment opportunities for local residents. He highlighted that 36 dams are currently under construction across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with eight already completed. Compensation for landowners affected by the Sanam Dam project will soon be finalized, he added.

"The completion of this dam will help raise the underground water table and resolve water scarcity issues in the region," Khan stated. "Sanam Dam is a joint venture of the provincial and federal governments, and special credit goes to Provincial Minister Humayun Khan for his efforts."

Commenting on national security, the minister reiterated the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership's stance of unity in the face of external threats. "Our leaders have made it clear that in response to Indian aggression, we will forget all differences and stand united with our armed forces and national institutions," he said.

He also stressed the provincial government's commitment to transparency under Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and PTI provincial president Junaid Akbar. Referring to recent incidents of corruption in Kohistan and other districts, the minister assured that strict action would be taken against all those involved. "Imran Khan's vision allows no space for corruption," he said. "We will ensure that those responsible are brought to justice so that no one dares to repeat such actions in the

future."

**Awareness seminar and walk held to mark World Thalassemia Day:** Khyber Medical University (KMU) Samarbagh Campus on Thursday, in collaboration with THQ hospital Samarbagh, organized a one-day seminar in connection with World Thalassemia Day to raise awareness about the disease, its causes, prevention, and treatment.

Held at the KMU campus hall under the directives of KMU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia-ul-Haq, the seminar marked the first official-level thalassemia awareness event in the district. The gathering was attended by thalassemia patients, healthcare professionals, students, journalists, and local notables.

Health experts stressed the importance of pre-marital screening to prevent hereditary disease. "Children born with thalassemia not only suffer themselves but also become a lifelong emotional and financial burden on families," speakers said. They noted that countries with mandatory pre-marital screening report almost zero cases.

Religious scholar Maulana Muhammad Imran Jandoli supported preventive health measures, stating that Islam encourages steps that protect human life.

Medical Superintendent Dr. Adil Khan announced free testing and blood transfusion services for thalassemia patients at Samarbagh Hospital. He also disclosed plans to establish a modern diagnostic laboratory to facilitate these services. Prizes, gifts and shields were presented to affected children on the occasion.

**Anniversary:** The 12th death anniversary of former district nazim and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Zahir Shah, popularly known as Bhai Jan, was commemorated with reverence at his residence in Odigram, Lower Dir. A prayer and Quran recitation ceremony was held, attended by a large number of PPP leaders, workers, and community members.

The late Zahir Shah was martyred 12 years ago in a bomb attack during an election campaign in Maidan, which claimed the lives of four of his companions. Former MPA and brother of the late leader, Advocate Muhammad Zameen Khan, along with PPP Lower Dir President Nawabzada Ahmad Zaib Khan, Mazhar Khan, Hanif Khan, and others, paid tributes to Late Zahir Shah. They described him as a principled leader, a committed party worker, and a servant of the people. "His martyrdom was a great loss to the PPP, as he was a seasoned and visionary politician," speakers noted. They pledged to continue his mission and uphold his legacy.

# Police busts inter-district alleged dacoit gang

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: Police busted an inter-district gang that was committing robberies in broad daylight and arrested four alleged dacoits. Three of the suspects belong to Charsadda while one is from Buner district, while Rs7 lacs and ten thousand in cash, jewelry and weapons from their possession, on Thursday.

This was disclosed by Superintendent of Police (SP) Investigation during a press conference and added that police have intensified operations against criminal elements and the police have exposed a very dangerous inter-district dacoit group that was committing crimes in broad daylight during an important operation.

SP Investigation Nisar Khan revealed in a press

conference that Mardan Police, led by City Police Station SHO Abdul Salam Khan, carried out a major operation and arrested the main accused while he was injured during an encounter.

After first aid, the accused made shocking revelations during interrogation saying that he was the leader of an organized inter-district gang which was involved in daytime robberies, looting and domestic violence in different districts. The police have started interrogating the four arrested accused.

**WSSCM signs MoU CINSR:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Water and Sanitation Services Mardan (WSSCM) and Company of Innovative Solutions and Network Research private

limited (CINSR) for improving water quality in urban Mardan.

Manager Municipal Services WSSCM Muhammad Ishaq and Manager Field Operations CINSR Musa Khan signed the MOU. On this occasion, Chief Executive Officer WSSCM Shahid Khan, General Manager Muhammad Khalil Akbar, Manager Planning and Projects Imran Zaman, Project Coordinator CINSR Mansoor Khan, Dr. Zeeshan Shafiq, Samad Riaz, Adil Shah, and others were also present. Under the Memorandum of Understanding, they will support WSSCM on improving the quality of drinking water in the city. They will also provide water quality testing equipment's to start water quality test in the City.

limited (CINSR) for improving water quality in urban Mardan.

# Commissioner visits GDC, SDC Hangu

## F.P. Report

HANGU: Commissioner Kohat paid a surprise visit to the Government Degree College Hangu and Service Delivery Center Hangu on Thursday morning. Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Hangu Sajjad Hussain was also with him on this occasion.

Commissioner Kohat Syed Motasim Billah Shah while expressing his extreme anger over the shortage of papers during the visit to the Intermediate examination center in the Degree College Hangu, sternly reprimanded the Controller of Board of

Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Kohat and directed to resolve this issue in future so that the valuable time of the students is not wasted. He also visited different parts of the college and directed to further improve the cleanliness condition.

Meanwhile, during a surprise visit to the Service Delivery Center (SDC) Hangu, Tehsildar Maqсад Ali and Naib Tehsildar Ayub were found absent and were suspended on the spot by the Commissioner Kohat Division. He also met the visitors in SDC who are waiting the Tehsildar and Naib

Tehsildar since 09:00 AM and inquired about their problems. Commissioner Kohat directed the ADC Hangu, present there to go and resolve the problem of a Senior Citizen on the spot. Similarly, he also directed to set up a Special Counter in the center for senior citizens.

Commissioner Kohat while addressing the staff, said that all visitors coming to the center are our guests and it is our duty to resolve their problems without any delay, so no negligence should be done in this regard. He warned that he will not hesitate to go to any extent against the guilty employees.

# Almost 59 held electricity theft

## F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) Kamalia, Xen Syed Fazal Abbas Shah talking to The Frontier Post, said that our task force is continuously

conducting operations against electricity thieves. In which 459 electricity thieves caught and FIR registered against them.

Xen further said that 59 person were arrested along with the FIR and fined them 58,12,1862

rupees and in which was received 53,12,3144 Rupees and deposited in the treasury of Pakistan. He said that our task force is identifying the electricity thieves and taking actions against them and these actions will continue.



HYDERABAD: Students praying for those who lost their lives in recent Indian attacks on Pakistan.

# AC inspects intermediate examination halls

## F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal surprisingly visited various intermediate examination halls in Landi Kotal on Thursday. He inspected different facilities provided in the examination halls.

On the complaint of locals, viral on social media the administrative high up specially visited the examination hall in Government Girls High Secondary School, Landi Kotal and interacted with female students and the exam staff.

Female exam hall superintendent Miss Sara Sultan thoroughly briefed the AC pertaining examination hall. Speaking on the occasion AC Adnan Mumtaz urged the exam crews to adopt all necessary initiatives to curb cheating. Without the exam contestants no would be permitted to enter into premises of examination hall, he opined. In case of negligence legal action will be taken against the responsible ones, he added.

AC expressed his satisfaction over the favorable environment, prevailed in the exam halls and rejected allegedly fake news circulated on social media last day regarding female students' halls. He maintained that the female staff executed their duties sincerely and no discrimination was done to any female students. It is to be mentioned here that the previous day some locals blamed on social media that a Christian female exam staff discriminated on religious grounds and favored some Christian female students in the exam hall.

# Concerted effort stressed for polio eradication

## F.P. Report

LARKANA: Deputy Commissioner Larkana reviewed the performance of the anti-polio campaign starting from May 26 to June 1, 2025, on Thursday.

During the meeting, the measures of the anti-polio campaign and the measures of the previous polio campaign and the performance of the joint polio campaign were reviewed, the meeting was also attended by Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Sindh Khair Muhammad Sheikh, senior officers of the Rangers, Sindh Police and Health Department, representatives of the district administration and officials of other relevant institutions.

**Woman poisons husband:** Villager Deedar Ali mallano, a resident of village Sahib Khan Deedar, under Badeh police station limits of Larkana district, was allegedly killed by his wife, Madam Khatoon mallano, who allegedly poisoned her husband, Deedar Hussain.

The police handed over the body of the deceased Deedar mallano to his heirs after conducting necessary procedures from Dokri Hospital. On this occasion, the father of the deceased, Muhammad Ramzan Mallano, while talking to the media, said that his wife, Madam Khatoon, has killed my son and wronged me, on being questioned, the police said that only after the FIR is filed by the heirs of the deceased, his killer will be arrested and justice will be done to him.

# Committee reduces edible items' rates

## F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: After a major cut in prices of wheat and its products, the Lakki Marwat district price review committee has reduced the rates of various essential food items, asking the traders to implement the new price list in letter and spirit and provide maximum relief to citizens.

The committee met here at the District Headquarters Complex Tajazai on Thursday with deputy commissioner Zeeshan Abdullah in the chair. Among others assistant commissioners Faqeer Hussain and Sultan Noordin Ahmer, additional AC Habibur Rehman, AFC Samiullah Khan and representatives of traders and consumers' bodies were in attendance.

The meeting discussed the previous and market rates of essential commodities, a drastic decline in wheat price, hygiene conditions at business outlets, implementation of hygiene and safety measures by traders and other relevant

matters with detail. The traders' representatives said that various food items were prepared from wheat products and after reduction in wheat and ghee price they had no objection to decrease the rates of roti, sweets, confectionaries, fast foods and bakery items.

A representative of the consumer's body Hameed Khan Meenakhel said at the meeting that the prices of food items fixed at the meeting must be implemented and the shopkeepers found involved in violating the official rate list should be punished.

He demanded of the district administration to focus on improving hygiene conditions at hotels, bakeries and poultry shops and ensure adherence to safety measures and precautions by traders dealing with those businesses. He said that promoting the mechanism of test purchase would prove helpful to expose violators of the official price list and initiate action against them.

Khan also urged for the presence of livestock department officials in the price committee meetings to formulate a comprehensive strategy for provision of quality meat and milk to consumers. After thorough deliberations the committee decided to reduce prices of roti, pulses, rice, spices, fast foods and bakery items.

The deputy commissioner directed the food authorities and price magistrates to provide the shopkeepers with the new price list and ensure its implementation in letter and spirit. Also, in the day, Mr Zeeshan chaired another meeting at his office to review performance of line departments with regard to the provincial government's cleanliness initiative.

He took serious notice of negligence on part of focal persons for not sharing progress of their respective departments with district administration. He asked the heads of departments to update his administration about cleanliness activities on a daily basis.

# KKKU announces annual exam 2025 schedule

## F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) Karak has officially announced the schedule and instructions for the upcoming M.A./M.Sc. (Part - I & II) Annual Examinations 2025.

All eligible students enrolled in the M.A./M.Sc. programs are expected to adhere to the announced schedule and guidelines. Admission forms are available at the Examinations & Secrecy Section of the University during office hours and can also be downloaded from the university website: [www.kkuk.edu.pk](http://www.kkuk.edu.pk).

The University has announced a structured fee schedule with Normal Fee: Until May 12, 2025, with Late Fee of Rs. 100/-; Until May 16, 2025, with Double Fee: Until May 21, 2025, with Triple Fee: Until May 26, 2025. Candidates are advised to consult the official notification or the university website for the specific fee amounts applicable to their respective categories (M.A./M.Sc. Part I or II).

Fresh admissions will not be offered to candidates whose MA/M.Sc. (Two Years) Degree Programs have been phased out as per HEC notification No. 1/5-

5/HEC/Coord/2019/HEC/951 dated November 01, 2021.

Examination fees must be deposited at the designated University bank branch on or before the last date of admission. Late fee penalties will apply as per the schedule. Demand Drafts will not be accepted. Candidates must submit the completed Examination Admission Form, the original Fee Receipt, and any other required documents (as detailed in the official notification) to the University. KKCU is committed to conducting a fair and transparent examination process for all students.

# Rallies held in solidarity with armed forces

## F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: In a powerful display of national unity and patriotism, large-scale protest rallies were held across Hafizabad by various religious, social, business, and civil society organizations to condemn India's recent unprovoked aggression against Pakistan.

The central rally, which commenced from the Press Club Jinnah Hall, was led by Additional Deputy Commissioner Hamid Nasir Goraya, Assistant Commissioner Salman Akbar and Chief Officer Municipal Committee Ikramullah Sandhu. A diverse and passionate crowd, including government officials, religious scholars, traders, journalists, educators, students, members of the Christian community, and representa-

tives from various walks of life, participated in the event.

Carrying national flags and placards inscribed with slogans in support of the Pakistan Armed Forces, the participants vociferously condemned the Indian attack and expressed unwavering solidarity with the defenders of the homeland. Chants of "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Pak Army Zindabad" echoed through the streets as the demonstrators pledged their readiness to sacrifice everything for the nation's defense.

Speakers at the rally, including members of the Peace Committee, local Ulema, and representatives of business and civic bodies, criticized India for its cowardly assault targeting innocent civilians, mosques, and civilian infrastructure under the cover of darkness. They lauded the

Pakistan Armed Forces for their swift, professional, and resolute response, affirming that the nation's defense is in capable and courageous hands.

"The entire Pakistani nation, from children to elders, from men to women, stands united with our brave armed forces. Today, we have demonstrated not only our unity but also our collective resolve to defend our sovereignty at any cost," declared one speaker.

The rally participants affirmed their full support for the armed forces and emphasized that, if needed, they were prepared to stand alongside them in the face of enemy aggression. The event concluded with renewed vows of loyalty to the country and prayers for peace, security, and the protection of Pakistan's territorial integrity.

# Rallies held in Buner

## F.P. Report

BUNER: The civil society arranged large-scale protest rallies across Buner in which various religious, social, business and people from every walk of life participated to condemn India's recent unprovoked

aggression against Pakistan, on Thursday.

The participants carrying national flags and placards inscribed with slogans in support of the Pakistan Armed Forces, the participants vociferously condemned the Indian attack and

expressed unwavering solidarity with the defenders of the homeland. Chants of "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Pak Army Zindabad" echoed through the streets as the demonstrators pledged their readiness to sacrifice everything for the nation's defense.





# Ukraine’s cities quiet as ceasefire kicks in

KYIV (Reuters): A three-day ceasefire declared by Russia came into effect with skies over Ukraine's major cities quiet, in a change from successive nights of heavy attacks by Russian drones and ballistic missiles.

Ukraine's air force reported that after the start of the Kremlin-sponsored ceasefire Russian aircraft twice launched guided bombs on the Sumy region of northern Ukraine. There was no word on damage and Reuters could not independently verify the attacks. The Russian ceasefire, coinciding with the 80th anniversary of the World War Two defeat of Nazi Germany, went into effect at midnight Moscow time (2100 GMT).

As part of the anniversary events, Russian President Vladimir Putin is hosting Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders in Moscow, and will review a military parade on Moscow's Red Square on May 9. Ukraine has not committed to abide by the Kremlin's ceasefire, calling it a ruse by Putin to create the impression he wants to end the war, which began when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Putin says he is committed to achieving peace. Ukraine launched successive drone attacks on Moscow this week, which had forced the

closure of airports in the Russian capital and the grounding of airliners.

Apart from the Ukrainian air force reports about the two launches of guided bombs, there were no reports in Ukraine of any Russian long-range drones or missiles being launched on Ukrainian cities. As of 3:45 am (00:45 GMT), the capital Kyiv was quiet, in contrast to 24 hours earlier when the city had reverberated with the sound of explosions from waves of Russian airborne attacks, and outgoing Ukrainian anti-aircraft fire. It was not immediately clear if there was a pause in fighting on the frontlines between Russian and Ukrainian forces. A Reuters witness near the front in eastern Ukraine said he could hear no sounds of fighting.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that his country stood by its offer to observe a 30-day ceasefire in the war with Russia. "We are not withdrawing this proposal, which could give diplomacy a chance," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address.

Russia, he said, had made no response to the 30-day offer except for new strikes. "This clearly and obviously demonstrates to everyone who the source of the war is," the Ukrainian president added. Zelenskyy also appeared to acknowl-

edge the numerous drone attacks that have been targeting Russian sites, including the city of Moscow, as the World War Two commemorations approached. "It is absolutely fair that Russian skies, the skies of the aggressor, are also not calm today, in a mirror-like way," he said. Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin, in a series of posts on the Telegram messaging app over a five-hour period, said 14 drones headed for the capital had been repelled or destroyed. This happened before the Kremlin-sponsored three-day ceasefire took effect.

The US proposed the 30-day ceasefire in March and Ukraine agreed. Russia has said such a measure could only be introduced after mechanisms to enforce and uphold it are put in place. Both countries are under pressure from US President Donald Trump to bring a swift end to the war, the biggest conflict in Europe since World War Two. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova expressed surprise at remarks from US envoy Keith Kellogg that Putin may be obstructing a comprehensive ceasefire. "The only obstacle to the ceasefire is Kyiv, which violates agreements and is unwilling to seriously discuss the terms of a long-term ceasefire," Zakharova said.

## Serbian leader’s flight en route to Moscow

MOSCOW (Reuters): Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic resumed his flight to Moscow for Russia's parade marking the 80th anniversary of victory in World War Two after his plane was halted in Baku due to ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The flight set down temporarily in Baku, Azerbaijan after several regional states shut their airspace over Ukrainian drone strikes in Moscow, which forced most of the Russian capital's airports to close, Tanjug news agency reported. Vucic was delayed for about two hours at Baku airport before taking off again for Moscow. Vucic is set to hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin on May 9, the day of the parade, the semi-official Serbian news agency reported, citing a Kremlin official.

European Union officials have urged presidents of nations aspiring to join the EU, including Vucic, to align their foreign policies with the bloc and avoid Moscow's World War Two victory rites because of Russia's three-year-old invasion of Ukraine. Last weekend, Vucic abruptly returned from the United States where he had expected to meet with President Donald Trump, citing health reasons. But his physicians said his condition had improved and he could return to work in mid-week.

## Putin and Maduro to sign pact

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russian President Vladimir Putin will hold talks with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in Moscow and the two leaders will sign a strategic partnership agreement, the Kremlin said. Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters it would be a "weighty, substantial and very important framework document", without providing details.

Russia's war in Ukraine has led to a breakdown in its relations with most Western states and prompted Moscow to strengthen ties with other countries that share its desire to counter the influence of what it calls the "collective West", including the United States. Since 2022, Russia has already signed strategic partnership pacts with China, North Korea and Iran. Venezuela has a fraught recent history with the United States, marked by broken diplomatic relations, sanctions and accusations of criminal activity and coup-planning. During his visit to Moscow, Maduro is also due to attend commemorative events around the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union and its allies over Nazi Germany, including a military parade.

## Arrests of former MP ordered

BOGOTA (Reuters): Colombia's Supreme Court issued arrest orders for Ivan Name, the former president of the country's Senate, and Andres Calle, the former president of the House of Representatives, over corruption allegations. Name, of the Alianza Verde party, and Calle, of the Liberal party, are accused of receiving 4 billion pesos (about \$1 million) to help secure congressional approval for key legislation under President Gustavo Petro.

The accusations were made by former officials from the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD), who are already in prison as part of the ongoing investigation. Both Name and Calle have denied the charges. Name has already been detained by police officials. As a result of the criminal proceedings, the lawmakers' congressional seats will be vacated and cannot be replaced while the legal process is underway.



GAZA: Displaced Palestinians receiving hot meals distributed by aid organizations in Jabalia refugee camp.

# Russia hosts world leaders for 80th anniversary of its defeat

MOSCOW (AP): Russia's President Vladimir Putin is set to host the leaders of China, Brazil and other heads of states for festivities marking the 80th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

Victory Day, which is celebrated in Russia on May 9, has become the country's most important secular holiday. A massive parade through Red Square and other ceremonies underline Moscow's efforts to project its power and cement the alliances it has forged while seeking a counterbalance to the West amid the 3-year-old war in Ukraine. "For Putin, this day is important as a demonstration how broad a coalition backing Russia is," said political analyst Nikolai Petrov.

The lineup of leaders coming to Moscow this year contrasts sharply to some past celebrations that drew top Western leaders at a time of friendlier ties between Russia and the West. The festivities have been overshadowed by reports of Ukrainian drone attacks targeting Moscow and severe disruptions at all four of the capital's airports, with dozens of flights delayed or canceled, stranding hundreds of passengers.

Tightened security around the celebrations also led to restrictions on cellphone internet service and reports of outages. Banks and taxi firms have preemptively warned customers about disruption to services over the holidays due to unstable internet access,

and some shops and supermarkets have restricted deliveries due to potential network problems. Putin described Chinese President Xi Jinping as "our main guest" at the Victory Day festivities when he discussed preparations for his visit with China's foreign minister. The Russian leader noted that he and Xi are to discuss both bilateral and global issues at their summit in Moscow. Xi arrived for a four-day visit. Putin's foreign policy adviser Yuri Ushakov has said they would discuss trade and Russia's supply of oil and gas to China, as well as cooperation within BRICS - the bloc of developing economies that initially included Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa but has since expanded to more countries.

Putin and Xi have met over 40 times and developed strong personal ties to bolster their "strategic partnership" as they both face soaring tensions with the West. China has offered robust diplomatic support to Moscow after the 2022 invasion and has emerged as a top market for Russian oil and gas, helping fill the Kremlin's war coffers. Russia also has relied on China as the main source of machinery and electronics to keep its military machine running after Western sanctions curtailed high-tech supplies. While Beijing hasn't provided weapons to use in Ukraine, it has backed the Kremlin diplomatically, blaming the West for

threatening Russia's security. China also condemned Western sanctions against Moscow. Russia, in turn, has consistently voiced support for Beijing on issues related to Taiwan.

Last month, Ukraine reported capturing two Chinese soldiers who were fighting for Russia and claimed there were over 150 others deployed alongside Moscow's forces. Beijing disavowed official involvement, saying it told its citizens not to enter foreign conflicts. Reports suggested the men were mercenaries answering advertisements. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, another top ally whom Putin has courted, had been expected in Moscow but he canceled his trip amid tensions with Pakistan after an attack in which gunmen opened fire on tourists in Indian-controlled Kashmir. India, which has had persistent tensions with China, watched the growing Russia-China relationship with unease but sought to maintain close ties with Moscow. Russia is a major defense supplier for India, and New Delhi's importance as a key trading partner for Moscow has grown since the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine. Just like China, India has become a key buyer of Russian oil. Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva also arrived, his first official trip to Moscow since the invasion of Ukraine. He twice visited Russia during his previous tenure as president in 2003-10.

# Vance says Russia was ‘asking for too much’ in its initial Ukraine peace offer

WASHINGTON (AP): Vice President JD Vance said that Russia was "asking for too much" in its initial peace offer as the United States looks to bring about an end to the war in Ukraine. The vice president, speaking at a Washington meeting hosted by the Munich Security Conference, did not elaborate on Moscow's terms, but said he was not pessimistic about the possibility of a peace deal. That is a more sanguine assessment than President Donald Trump's recent skepticism that Russian President Vladimir Putin wants to end the war that began in February 2022 when Russia invaded.

"I wouldn't say that the Russians are uninterested in bringing this thing to a resolution," Vance said. "What I would say is right now: the Russians are asking for a certain set of requirements, a certain set of concessions in order to end the conflict. We think they're asking for too much," he said. Trump, when asked about the vice president's comments, told reporters at the White House, "Well, it's possible that's right." He seemed to imply that Vance had details that he did not have because he was preoccupied with other matters. "We are getting to a point where some decisions are going to have to be made. I'm not happy about it," Trump said of the peace effort.

Vance did not repeat any of the criticisms of Volodymyr Zelenskyy that Vance had aired during an Oval Office blowup in February with the Ukrainian leader, and he made a point of saying the US appreciated Ukraine's willingness to have a 30-day ceasefire. But the Republican vice president, citing Russia's unwillingness on that point, said the

US would like to move past that and have the Russian and Ukrainian leaders sit down directly to negotiate a long-term settlement that would end the fighting. "What the Russians have said is, 'A 30-day ceasefire is not in our strategic interests.' So we've tried to move beyond the obsession with the 30-day ceasefire and more on the, what would a long-term settlement look like," Vance said. Vance's talk at the conference event followed his appearance at the organization's February summit in Germany, where he ruffled feathers for his comments that free speech is "in retreat" across Europe. Vance addressed that and said his comments applied to the US under Democratic President Joe Biden's administration, just as they did to Europe.

"It's not 'Europe bad, America good.' It's that I think that both Europe and

the United States, we got a little bit off track, and I encourage us all to get back on track together," he said. On the Middle East, Vance did not shed light on the timing of planned talks between the US and Iran over Iran's nuclear program. He said the Trump administration felt the inspection and enforcement provisions in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal negotiated under Democratic President Barack Obama were "incredibly weak" and "allowed Iran to sort of stay on this glide path toward a nuclear weapon if they flip the switch and press go." "We think that there is a deal here that would reintegrate Iran into the global economy, that would be really good for the Iranian people, but would result in the complete cessation of any chance that they can get a nuclear weapon. And that's what we're negotiating toward," Vance said.

# Tufts student challenging immigration detention must be sent to Vermont

LOUISIANA (Reuters) : -A federal appeals court has ordered President Donald Trump's administration to transfer a Turkish student at Tufts University to Vermont for a bail hearing from Louisiana, where she is being detained by immigration authorities after engaging in pro-Palestinian advocacy on campus.

Ruling by the New York-based 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals marked a victory for Rumeysa Ozturk, and brought her a step closer to a hearing at which a judge could decide to order her release after six weeks in custody. Her case has become a high-profile example of the Republican president's efforts to deport pro-Palestinian activists on US campuses who have spoken out against Israel's war in Gaza.

A three-judge panel rejected the administration's request to pause a judge's April 18 order requiring Ozturk to be transferred to

Vermont so she could be available for a bail hearing and proceedings in the legal challenge to her detention. "We're grateful the court refused the government's attempt to keep her isolated from her community and her legal counsel as she pursues her case for release," said Esha Bhandari, a lawyer for Ozturk at the American Civil Liberties Union. US District Judge William Sessions in Burlington had previously scheduled the bail hearing, but the 2nd Circuit gave the administration until May 14 to transfer Ozturk to the custody of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Vermont, which could result in bail proceedings being postponed.

The administration could potentially ask the US Supreme Court to intervene. A spokesperson for the US Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, stressed that the ruling "does not prevent the continued detention of Ms.

Ozturk." Tricia McLaughlin, the spokesperson, in a statement said the department "will continue to fight for the arrest, detention, and removal of aliens who have no right to be in this country," Ozturk, a PhD student and Fulbright scholar, was arrested on a street in the Boston suburb of Somerville on March 25 after the US State Department revoked her student visa, citing an op-ed she co-authored in Tufts' student newspaper last year.

That opinion piece criticized the school's response to calls by students to divest from companies with ties to Israel after the onset of the war in Gaza, and to "acknowledge the Palestinian genocide." Her arrest by masked agents was captured in a viral video and prompted immediate litigation. Her lawyers called her detention unlawful and a violation of her free speech rights under the US Constitution's First Amendment. She was sent to Louisiana the day after her arrest, after being briefly held in Vermont. A lawsuit filed in Boston was later transferred to Vermont, where she was being held when the case was filed, over the objections of the Trump administration, which argued she could only challenge her detention where she was today being detained, Louisiana.

Requiring her to litigate in Louisiana would mean any appeals in her case would be heard by the most conservative federal appeals court nationally, and her lawyers have argued the administration moved her to engage in "forum shopping." The administration told the 2nd Circuit that Congress had made clear that any challenges to government deportation decisions must proceed in immigration court, rather than federal district court like the one Ozturk will attend in Vermont.

# ‘US will call Persian Gulf the Arabian Gulf’

WASHINGTON (AP): President Donald Trump plans to announce while on his trip to Saudi Arabia next week that the United States will now refer to the Persian Gulf as the Arabian Gulf or the Gulf of Arabia, according to two US officials. Arab nations have pushed for a change to the geographic name of the body of water off the southern coast of Iran, while Iran has maintained its historic ties to the gulf.

The two US officials spoke with The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss the matter. The White House and National Security Council did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment. The Persian Gulf has been widely known by that name since the 16th century, although usage of "Gulf of Arabia" and "Arabian Gulf" is dominant in many countries in the Middle East. The government of Iran - formerly Persia - threatened to sue Google in 2012 over the company's decision not to label the body of water at all on its maps. On Google Maps in the US, the body of water appears as Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf). Apple Maps only says the Persian Gulf. The US military for years has unilaterally referred to the Persian Gulf as the Arabian Gulf in statements and images it releases. The name of the

body of water has become an emotive issue for Iranians who embrace their country's long history as the Persian Empire. A spat developed in 2017 during Trump's first term when he used the name Arabian Gulf for the waterway. Iran's president at the time, Hassan Rouhani, suggested Trump needed to "study geography." "Everyone knew Trump's friendship was for sale to the highest bidder. We now know that his geography is, too," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote online at the time. Iran's current foreign minister also weighed in, saying that names of Mideast waterways do "not imply ownership by any particular nation, but rather reflects a shared respect for the collective heritage of humanity." "Politically motivated attempts to alter the historically established name of the Persian Gulf are indicative of hostile intent toward Iran and its people, and are firmly condemned," Abbas Aragchi wrote on the social platform X.

"Any short-sighted step in this connection will have no validity or legal or geographical effect, it will only bring the wrath of all Iranians from all walks of life and political persuasion in Iran, the US and across the world." Trump can change the name for official US purposes, but he can't dictate what the rest of the world calls it. The International Hydrographic Organization - of which the United States is a member - works to ensure all the world's seas, oceans and navigable waters are surveyed and charted uniformly, and also names some of them. There are instances where countries refer to the same body of water or landmark by different names in their own documentation. In addition to Saudi Arabia, Trump is also set to visit Doha, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, which also lie on the body of water. Originally planned as Trump's first trip overseas since he took office on Jan. 20, it comes as Trump has tried to draw closer to the Gulf countries as he seeks their financial investment in the US and support in regional conflicts, including resolving the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and limiting Iran's advancing nuclear program.

The US president also has significant financial ties to the countries through his personal businesses, over which he has retained ownership from the Oval Office. The move comes several months after Trump said the US would refer to the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

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# S Korean presidential candidate accuses party of pushing him out

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korea's right-wing presidential candidate Kim Moon-soo accused his party of trying to force him out and threatened to take legal action just weeks ahead of a snap election slated for June 3.

Kim told a press conference he believed the party leadership was trying to "bring him down" in favour of another candidate, former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, even though he had been chosen as the party's "legitimate" nominee. The People Power Party (PPP) selected Kim as its candidate through primaries but has since demanded Kim and Han negotiate which one of them would represent the party in the election.

Han, who resigned as acting leader last week to run in the polls, is not a member of the PPP but was prime minister under ousted President Yoon Suk Yeol, who was from the party. Unifying the conservative candidates is seen as one of the few options in

order to stand a chance against Democratic Party frontrunner Lee Jae-myung in the election. In a two-way race, Lee has 44% support against Han with 34%, while Lee leads 43% against Kim's 29%, according to a National Barometer Survey released.

Han was the preferred candidate among 53% of PPP supporters versus 32% who backed Kim. Conservative leader Yoon was removed from office in April over his shock martial law order, prompting the snap election. But efforts to form a unity ticket among conservatives have proved difficult. "The forced unification process that's underway now is a forceful candidate replacement and an attempt to bring me down... so it could lead to legal disputes. Stop it immediately," Kim said of the party leadership. Kim's supporters filed an injunction to stop the party from holding a convention this weekend to officially pick either Kim or Han as a candidate, Yonhap News Agency

reported.

The feud has overshadowed the conservative party's already uphill battle to retain the presidency and policy debate has taken a back seat, while Lee met business leaders to discuss job creation and deregulation and urged North Korea to stop military provocation and come to dialogue. Senior PPP leaders and Han's campaign are pressuring Kim to come to an agreement before May 11 when the registration for presidential candidates closes. Kim has rejected the calls and proposed a one-week campaign for each candidate and a public survey afterwards to pick a unified candidate. In response, Kweon Seong-dong, floor leader of the PPP, said that Kim was trying to keep his candidacy in a "pathetic" way, pointing to opinion polls that show him trailing Han. Kweon began a hunger strike along with other senior party leaders, increasing pressure on Kim to quickly unify his candidacy with Han.



The Frontier Post

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## Time to test Washington's sincerity

**A**T the heart of the economic and trade tensions between China and the United States lies a narrative that, in trying to besmirch China's image, actually places the blame squarely on the US.

The narrative is that China has been a leech on the US, taking advantage of it in whatever way it can to free-ride its achievements, and that by doing so it threatens the US' shining glory as the pinnacle of human progress.

The principal proponent of this narrative has been the White House's chief trade adviser, Peter Navarro, who has been the driving force behind the trade war with China during the president's first term and the driving force behind the tariff attack of his second administration, which is aimed at coercing the US' trade partners to align with the US in decoupling from China.

Ironically, Navarro is likely to go down in infamy as having done as much damage to the US' status, credibility and economy, as various US administrations have with their financially draining and morally bankrupting military adventurism in the name of "American exceptionalism".

Having architected the tariff war, he has not only cashed out any vestiges of trust the international community may have had in the US as a team player, but also triggered the decline of the US stock market and turmoil in the US bond market and shaken the international currency status of the dollar. His claim that the tariffs would help push companies to expand manufacturing in the US, thus creating more jobs and boosting growth, is also looking more and more like wishful thinking.

The US Federal Reserve warned of the "risks of higher unemployment and higher inflation" as a result of the tariff rollout, as it announced another rate cuts pause on Wednesday.

US businesses are also warning of the risk of lost opportunities as a result of the US tariff policy and export restrictions targeting China. Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said on Tuesday that China will likely be a \$50 billion artificial intelligence market in two to three years. "It would be a tremendous loss not to be able to address it as an American company. It's going to bring back revenues, it's going to bring back taxes, it's going to create lots of jobs here in the United States." Just days after the US administration adopted its unlawful and unjustified unilateral tariffs on the US' trade partners, US officials were crowing that around 70 countries had already called to strike deals. Navarro even predicted there would be 90 deals in 90 days. But more than a month has passed, and no deals have materialized.

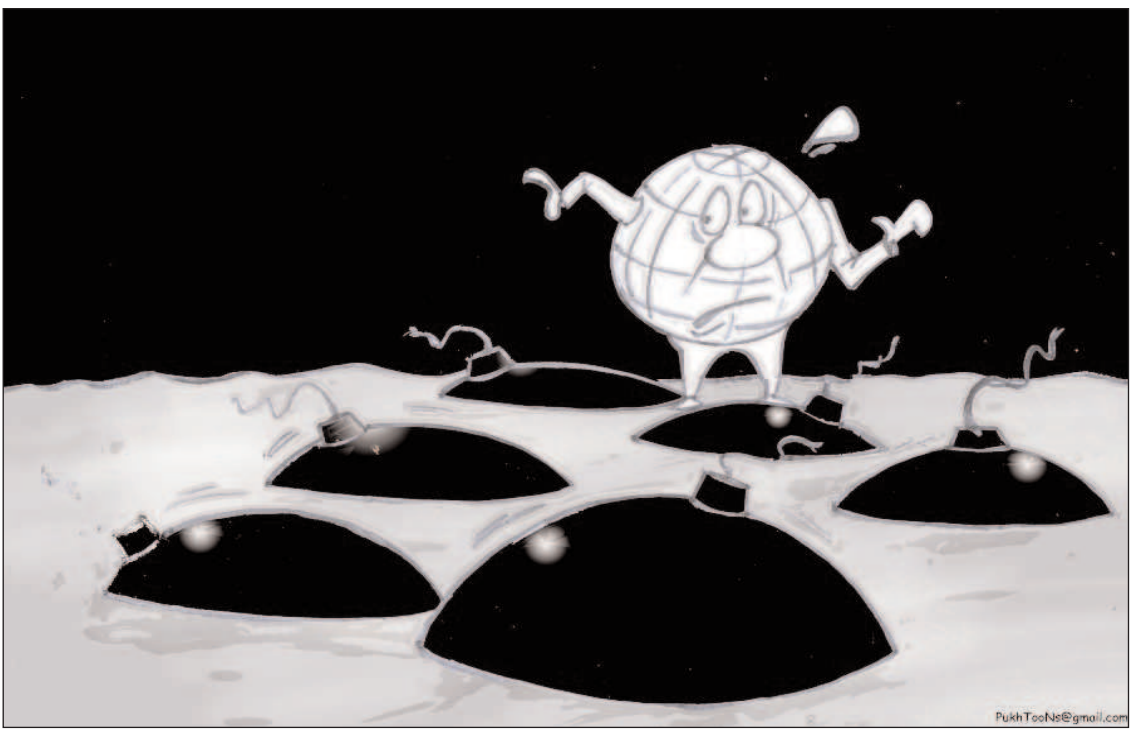
The second round of tariff talks between the US and Japan ended last week with no major breakthrough made. And talks with the European Union, the US' largest trading partner, have also come to a standstill, with Brussels having expressed its resolve to hold its line in defense of the 27-member bloc's economic interests. China, on its part, has taken resolute and forceful countermeasures to protect its rights and interests. And its legitimate defensive actions have served to clarify that it is the US that bears responsibility for the damage being done to the global economy and world trade system. The self-harming repercussions of the US' unjustified, irrational and unreasonable tariffs and the appeal of China's principled stance have prompted the US administration to reach out to China, with a view to working something out.

China has indicated that it is willing to oblige, but made it clear that the planned communication in Geneva on the weekend is a prologue, not an ending. The US side should not mistake its willingness to engage in constructive discussions as a sign that it has in any way compromised its position, which stands firmly on the grounds of international legality and the importance of considering the broader interests of the international community.

China remains firmly opposed to bullying and hegemonic behavior of any form. By standing on clear principles and setting red lines before any negotiations take place, China has underscored its nuanced strategy that balances the imperative of safeguarding its core interests with a willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue to resolve differences, while championing a more equitable and democratic international order. And while it is willing to address the concerns of US industry and consumers, it remains vigilant about the sincerity of the US side and seeks tangible actions that validate good intentions. The unilateral tariff measures of the US have had an adverse impact not only on the US itself, but also the global community. The US should adhere to the international economic and trade rules that the rest of the international community abides by, demonstrate sincerity in conducting mutually beneficial trade, and rectify its misguided view of international relations as being zero-sum.

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## Making food a political issue throttles Gaza lives

Michael Jansen

**I**N a world where 757 million people face chronic hunger, and 45 million children suffer from wasting due to acute malnutrition, Gaza stands out as unique. War, drought, earthquakes, and other natural disasters are responsible for starvation in other places. Gaza is the only territory where a hostile foreign power illegally occupying Gaza is deliberately depriving the population of food, water, fuel, and medical supplies. Weaponising food is prohibited under international law.

Last week the International Court of Justice (ICJ) held five days of hearings on how Israel is violating its international legal obligations as the illegal occupier of Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank. Envoys addressing the hearings focused on Israel's 60-day total blockade, the longest closure Gaza has faced so far.

It is not known when and how aid deliveries will resume. Israel is, reportedly, trying to design a means of delivering food packages directly to Gaza's 2.3 million people. This would ensure Israeli control and exclude the involvement of international aid organisations. They are sharply critical of the two-month blockade and the resumption on March 18th of bombing and ground attacks in Gaza which have killed more than 2,300 and injured 6,000 Palestinians, the majority women and children.

The ICJ hearings, mandated by the UN General Assembly, included submissions from 49 nations and organisations. Among the most telling interventions came from the director of legal affairs at Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry Mohamed Saud Alnasser. He stated, "Less than a year ago, the court heard that Israel's policies and practices in the occupied territory, including its settlement practices, its continued

occupation and its annexation of parts of that territory are flagrant violations of international law that must be brought to an end as a matter of urgency."

He added, "Sadly, but predictably, Israel chose to ignore the court's ruling, showing it considered itself above the law".

He condemned Israel's "heinous conduct" in Gaza where it has imposed "siege conditions" since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7th, 2023.

During the first two days of the hearings, speakers were highly critical of Israel's actions. On the third day, however, a US State Department legal adviser, Joshua Simmons, expressed disagreement by saying that Israel need not work with UNRWA, the UN agency which is the main provider and conduit for aid deliveries in Gaza. He said there is "no legal requirement that an occupying power permit a third state or international organisation to conduct activity that would compromise its security interests."

Israel has banned cooperation with UNRWA as Israel claims 19 of UNRWA's 13,000 staff participated in Hamas' attack.

International humanitarian agencies have castigated Israel and launched appeals for its friends to exert pressure to allow live saving aid to flow immediately. Britain and France have called upon Israel to lift the siege and blockade, and ceasefire and US President Donald Trump said on April 25th he had told Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to allow food and medicine into Gaza. Israel has replied that the blockade would continue until all 59 of the Israeli captives of Hamas are released. Israel accuses Hamas of diverting aid, which both Hamas and aid agencies deny.

Before the ongoing war, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation

said agriculture accounted for "approximately 10 percent of Gaza's economy, with more than 560,000 people relying entirely or partially on cropping, herding, or fishing for their livelihoods." The UN reports the war has devastated Gaza's farmland and grazing areas, and destroyed the fishing fleet, making Gazans totally dependent on supplies from outside the Strip and vulnerable to malnutrition.

"Not a drop of water, not a grain of wheat" has entered Gaza since March 2nd, UNRWA spokeswoman Juliette Touma told the BBC. In an e-mail to Gulf Today she said that supplies entering during the ceasefire "are running out quickly. It's been two months of a tight siege; Gaza is a place that is highly dependent on imports from outside. Every day, Gaza needs 500-600 trucks of supplies (commercial and humanitarian)." She called for an end to the blockade and aid to flow to "match the unprecedented need."

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Deputy Director of Operation Pascal Hundt said in a statement, "Civilians in Gaza are facing an overwhelmingly daily struggle to survive the dangers of hostilities, cope with relentless displacement, and endure the consequences of being deprived of urgent humanitarian assistance." He added, "This situation must not — and cannot — be allowed to escalate further."

World Health Organisation (WHO) head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called the Gaza situation "catastrophically bad. We are breaking the bodies and minds of the children of Gaza." His deputy Michael Ryan told reporters, "We are starving the children of Gaza. We are complicit." He continued, "As a physician I am

angry. It is an abomination...the current level of malnutrition is causing a collapse in immunity." Ryan warned that cases of pneumonia and meningitis in women and children could increase.

On April 25th, the World Food Programme (WFP) delivered the last of its stocks of flour to bakeries and rice, lentils, tomato paste and tinned vegetables to kitchens which have prepared hot meals. WFP director Cindy McCain told US public radio, "There's nothing left. There's no place to go for food anymore."

She added, "Food is not political. And to make food political is something that is unconscionable, number one, but number two, it just shouldn't happen."

In its annual report released last month Amnesty International wrote, "Israel's relentless military offensive on the occupied Gaza Strip intensified the long-standing humanitarian crisis caused by Israel's 18-year unlawful blockade of Gaza." After Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2007, Israel besieged, blockaded, and waged war on Gaza in 2008-2009, 2012, 2014, 2021 and 2024-2025. These wars have not only killed Gazans and devastated the Strip but also deprived them of stability and a decent standard of life and diminished their physical and psychological resistance to trauma and deprivation.

On February 8th this year, the British medical journal The Lancet published a study by Michel Guillot, Mohammed Draidi, José H C Monteiro Da Silva, and Ismail Lubbad who reported that life expectancy fell steeply during the first year of the war that began in October 2023. They found life expectancy fell by more than 30 years during the first 12 months of the war, nearly "halving pre-war levels" of the mid-seventies for both men and women.

## Role of HR in improving governance

Khosh Bakht Hussain

**I**N earlier times people were unsafe, those in power mercilessly killed the less powerful. Wars and attacks were common and people were killed without any accountability. There was lawlessness in the world. To make the world a better place to live, human rights were introduced which are the universal rights of every human being.

United nations was established in 1945 and those countries who are signatories to human rights conventions, are obliged to provide these rights to their citizens. Rights such as freedom of expression, the right to marriage and the right to do business are ensured for the people of these countries. However, many people are unaware of their rights, therefore they are unable to claim them. If people become aware it will make a real difference. Moreover, it can also improve good governance if every person will be given his rights then justice will be delivered easily.

Human rights emerged properly in written format in response to the lawlessness, wars and brutalities throughout history. Human

life was considered worthless and easy to take before the introduction of legal rights, and disputes over small things often led to significant loss of life. After World War II, the international community took a major step by forming the United Nations (UN) in 1945, with the aim of maintaining peace and protecting human dignity.

In 1948, the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which outlined rights such as equality, justice and freedom for all individuals regardless of their nationality, gender or religion. Signatory countries are expected to safeguard and promote these rights within their borders.

Human rights are not just written principles; they are the practical standards that ensure stability and prosperity of a country. Countries where human rights are prioritized experience less conflict, stronger institutions, and greater democracy. The basic human rights like, the right to life, freedom of speech and fair trial are essential for any society. When citizens are empowered and protected by these rights they even-

tually become able to contribute effectively to national development. Countries that ignore and violate these rights experience conflict, international condemnation and internal instability.

Pakistan became a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948, but many individuals are unaware of their rights. For instance, women especially in rural areas are deprived of education, health and legal protection. Issues such as child marriage, domestic violence and workplace harassment remain prevalent and individuals are often unaware that from where to seek justice and how to protect their rights. To exercise rights, people must first be aware and informed; only then they can claim them.

Human rights protection and good governance are directly related. When citizens are aware of their rights, governments become more accountable, transparent and responsive. Civil rights such as freedom of expression, rights to information empowers civil society and strengthen democratic

institutions. Good governance cannot exist in vacuum, a country can achieve good governance only if justice prevails, laws are enforced fairly and people trust state institutions. For countries like Pakistan to enhance good governance it is mandatory to educated citizens about human rights and strengthens legal institutions to protect those rights. This will help reduce corruption and move Pakistan toward becoming a more inclusive society. In a world marked by inequality and injustice, human rights are a ray of hope and a roadmap for fair governance. Without these rights, we cannot imagine of a peaceful and equitable society. Implementing and embracing human rights is not just a legal or moral obligation but it is a pathway to peace, equality, progress and prosperity. When every citizen of the country is granted their rights regardless of their gender, social class or race it paves the way for true justice and inclusive development.

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## As Ukraine looks towards peace, Bosnia offers a cautionary tale

Nadina Ronc

**T**HE 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the Bosnian War, offers both inspiration and a stark warning. It succeeded in halting bloodshed, but at the cost of long-term dysfunction. Bosnia and Herzegovina emerged divided, politically paralysed, and perpetually dependent on international oversight. Ukraine cannot afford to follow that path.

A rushed or externally imposed settlement — especially one prioritising "balance" over functionality — risks turning Ukraine into a fractured, weakened state locked in limbo. The temptation to accept any peace to stop the war must be resisted. Not all peace is created equal.

The Dayton Agreement created two autonomous entities within Bosnia, each with its own president, parliament, and bureaucracy, and governed by a collective presidency that required consensus. The result? More than 180 ministers for a population under 3.5 million, and a state too fragmented to govern or reform. Ethnic divisions were frozen into law, and nationalist deadlock has since stymied progress, including efforts towards European Union membership.

Ukraine faces a similar risk if a peace deal grants "special status" or federal autonomy to Russian-occupied territories like Donbas. Such an arrangement would embed dysfunction and division at the heart of Ukraine's political system. Pro-Russian proxies with veto power could block defence, foreign policy, or EU and NATO integration — giving Moscow influence in Kyiv without firing another shot.

Worse still, this would create an internal deadlock that hollows out Ukrainian sovereignty.

Worse still, this would create an internal deadlock that hollows out Ukrainian sovereignty. Bosnia's experience shows how political paralysis, born from structural compromise, can entrench instability rather than resolve it. For Ukraine, that would mean a future shaped not by peace, but by permanent vulnerability. This dynamic plays directly into President Vladimir Putin's vision of a "Greater Russia", where former Soviet states remain under Moscow's thumb. Just as nationalist actors in the Balkans have sought to redraw Bosnia's borders, Russia seeks to dominate Ukraine by freezing its conflict rather than resolving it. Bosnia also offers another caution: the dangers of long-term international trusteeship. The Office of the High Representative, created under Dayton, still holds sweeping powers over Bosnia's domestic affairs. While useful in preventing renewed conflict, this arrangement has stunted institutional development and left Bosnia reliant on foreign actors. Ukraine must reject any peace that removes its agency or places it under indefinite international supervision. Temporary stabilisation may be necessary, but Kyiv must remain the final authority on its laws, governance, and future direction. A sovereign state cannot exist with foreign capitals acting as its ultimate decision-makers. That's why Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's 2022 decree — refusing negotiations with Russia while Putin remains in power — deserves a second look.

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its ultimate decision-makers.

That's why Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's 2022 decree — refusing negotiations with Russia while Putin remains in power — deserves a second look. While morally justified, it may limit Ukraine's room to manoeuvre if global power dynamics shift. Peace must be principled, but also strategically flexible. Diplomacy, like war, requires room to adapt.

As Bosnia's former Foreign Minister Muhamed Sacirbey once said, peace negotiations are like poker. At Dayton, Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic understood the stakes better than his counterparts. Bosnia's Alija Izetbegovic lacked a clear strategy. Croatia's Franjo Tudjman let pride dictate terms. And Richard Holbrooke, the United States envoy, played for legacy as much as for peace.

Today, new players are at the table. As US political winds shift and figures like Donald Trump re-emerge, there's a growing risk that Ukraine could be treated as a bargaining chip in a larger geopolitical game. It must not be reduced to a pawn.

Any durable peace must be rooted in sovereignty, justice, and national unity. Ukraine needs credible security guarantees — not just promises, but real deterrence against future aggression. Justice, too, must be non-negotiable. Blanket amnesties for war crimes and collaborators would not bring reconciliation, only delay it.

Occupied territories must be reunified under Ukrainian law — not left in limbo as autonomous zones or proxy-administered enclaves. Doing so would institutionalise division and lay the groundwork for future conflict.

Ukraine also needs a

well-funded, strategic roadmap for reconstruction and European integration. Rebuilding physical infrastructure is essential, but so is embedding Ukraine within the political and economic structures of the European Union.

Above all, Ukraine must retain full strategic autonomy — the right to choose its alliances, shape its institutions, and define its future without coercion from Moscow or even from well-meaning Western partners.

Ukraine is not a buffer state. It is a sovereign nation whose people have paid an extraordinary price for self-determination. That must be the foundation of any peace agreement—not the ambitions of foreign powers or the expediency of a quick fix.

Compromise is a part of diplomacy. But not all compromises serve peace. Bosnia teaches us that a flawed peace can entrench division, delay healing, and keep a country caught between war and true resolution.

Ukraine's mission is clear: achieve peace, but not at the cost of sovereignty, unity, or long-term viability. Ending a war is hard. Building a just and sustainable peace is harder still.

Bosnia achieved the former. Ukraine must do both.



# China, Russia's sacrifices must not be forgotten

The 80th anniversary of the most awful war in human memory offers them, and the craven media elites who so uncritically swallow and regurgitate this fateful, deadly nonsense, a chance to break free from what the great 18th century English poet and mystic William Blake called "the infernal grove" of lies and damnation that threatens us all.

AI offers powerful and multifaceted tools that can significantly enhance our ability to combat climate change, from improving climate forecasts and optimizing renewable energy systems to transforming agriculture and waste management.



# SCCI organises solidarity rally with govt and army

— speakers praise armed forces for thwarting unprovoked Indian strikes

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has expressed full solidarity and unwavering support for the government and Armed Forces of Pakistan in response to the unprovoked Indian military strikes in several parts of the country.

Fazal Moqeen Khan, president of the chamber while speaking at a solidarity gathering here at the chamber house on Thursday strongly condemned the Indian strikes on civilians in Pakistan and AJK and highly praised the armed forces for counterattacks and knocking down India's five jets.

"Today, Pakistan again face with Indian aggression and our utmost duty, being a one nation and Pakistani to show unity, trust and steadfastness in own ranks",

The solidarity rally was spearheaded by SCCI president Fazal Moqeen Khan, Senior vice president Abdul

Jalil Jan, former presidents Haji Muhammad Afzal, Malik Niaz Ahmad, member of the chamber executive committee Aftab Iqbal, Gul Zaman, Shams Rahim, Ishfaq Ahmad, Nadeem Rauf, and Rashid Iqbal Siddique, Secretary General SCCI Muqtasid Ahsan and others.

The chamber members, staff and mediapersons in a large number participated in the rally.

The participants were holding placards and banners, yelling slogans in favour of Pakistan Armed forces and against the Indian aggression.

The demonstrators raised full-throated voices in support of Pakistan Armed forces, COAS Gen Asim Munir, military and civil leadership of the country.

The protesters also shouted anti-Indian Prime Minister Modi and their armed forces.

Fazal Moqeen said Pakistan is a peaceful coun-

try in the region and our desire for peace must not be constructed as weakness.

He said Indian misadventure against Pakistan was a blatant mistake, and warned Indians will pay a huge price and face its dire consequences.

The Pakistani nation has always been one to safeguard the country's ideological and geographical frontiers and foil evil designs of enemies, the SCCI chief remarked.

Moqeen continued to say that the Pakistan armed forces undauntingly fought by defending the motherland and bravely shot down Indian air jets, which is highly commendable.

He said the business community stands shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan armed forces and fully supports the bold, timely and brave decision of National Security Council (NSC) under which Pakistan Armed forces has given permission to give benefit-

ing responses to any Indian aggression.

The SCCI chief said this decision is not only a proclamation of safeguarding the motherland but it is also a trust spokesperson, reflection of honour and self-respect.

He paid rich tribute to the Pakistan Army, Air Force and Navy who put their lives in danger and safe the motherland from Indian aggression.

Moqeen says: "they being the business community not only custodian of the economy but also guards of the national ideology".

We fully support our military and civil leadership and state institutions.

Let's come together and unite to make Pakistan a greater nation and show the whole world that we are a brave and awaken, honourable nation and ready anytime to defend the motherland from the evil designs of the enemies.



PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqeen Khan speaking to media at Chamber's House.

## Total liquid foreign reserves \$15.48 billion

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan increased to US\$ 15,482.6 million as of May 02, 2025 while the reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan also rose to \$ 10,332.5 million.

"SBP reserves increased by US\$ 118 million to US\$ 10,332.5 million" during the week ended on May 02, 2025, the central bank Thursday reported in its weekly statement on liquid foreign reserves position.

Meanwhile, the net foreign reserves held by commercial banks also inched up to \$ 5,150.1 million, according to the breakup of the foreign reserves for the period under review.

Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on April 25, 2025, were \$ 15,251.8 million.

Among them the central bank held foreign reserves recorded as \$ 10,214.4 million while reserves of \$ 5,037.4 million were held by the commercial banks.

# Haroon interacts with KCCI to resolve traders' issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Thursday held a virtual meeting with the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) to discuss and resolve the city's business issues.

The meeting aimed to address several pressing issues concerning Karachi's industrial sector, including electricity supply, water provision, rising gas levies, tax collection problems, and the challenges faced by exporters, said a news release.

During the discussion, Haroon Akhtar Khan stressed the formation of committees to tackle these issues, with the KCCI playing a significant role in these initiatives.

These committees have constitutes on the Prime Minister's directives to ensure a focused and systematic approach to resolving the concerns of local chambers and industrialists.

"The goal is to resolve all the issues that are hindering the growth of our industries," said Haroon.

Reaffirming the PM's vision, the SAPM underscored the urgency of boosting industrial growth across Pakistan. He highlighted that the ongoing tariff war presents a unique opportunity for Pakistani industries to compete globally.

"The Prime Minister has directed us to revive local industries and significantly enhance exports," he added.

A significant update came from the Special

Assistant, who reported that due to the Prime Minister's efforts, the policy rate has been reduced to 11%, a move expected to ease the financial burden on businesses. However, Shawal Malik from KCCI pointed out a critical challenge—the aging and deteriorating electricity infrastructure in Karachi, which is leading to increased production costs for local businesses.

Despite these challenges, Haroon reassured the KCCI that the government is fully committed to resolving these issues and supporting Karachi's industrial sector.

This meeting marks a crucial step toward the government's ongoing efforts to ensure the growth and competitiveness of Pakistani industries.

## Gold prices decrease Rs4,200 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.4,200 on Thursday and was sold at Rs.352,700 against its sale at Rs.356,900 on the previous trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs.3,601 to Rs.302,383 from Rs.305,984 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 Karat decreased by Rs.3,301 to Rs.277,194 from Rs.280,495.

The rates of per tola silver declined by Rs.65 to Rs.3,417 and ten gram silver dipped by Rs.56 to Rs.2,929 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market also decreased by \$42 to \$3,343 from \$3,385 whereas that of silver declined by \$0.65 to close at \$32.35, the Association reported.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Madam Afsheen Civil Judge VII/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No 213/1 Institution 2023. Date of hearing, 14/5/2025. Case Title: Said Nowshad VS Alam Zeb etc. Notice to No. 6. Zafar Ali. 7. Sajad Ali. 11. Yamen Khan sons. 12. Mst Nizakat. 13. Rahat. 14. Sheema daughters of Bakhtmand Shah. 17/1. Mst Asia widow. 17/2. Kashif son. 17/3. Mst Sheren daughter. 17/4. Mst Javeria. 17/5. Mst Uzma. 17/6. Mst Sara daughters of Bashamand. 22. Afsar Ali Khan son of Mst Shamirozay resident of Rega. 23. Mst Rahat widow. 24. Zakirullah. 25. Karimullah. 26. Ziaullah sons of Sher Zaman s/o Mst Shamirozay. 27. Bakht Jamil. 28. Ahmed Jamel sons of Zarjamel resident of Shalbandi. 35. Zaren Shah s/o Rehman Shah resident of muchAmnawar. 36. Abdul Hamad s/o Azi Muhammad. 37. AliSafdar s/o Jalandar resident of Amnawar. 38/1. Mst Shahi Meena widow. 38/2. Khir Bahadur son. 38/3. Mst Balanishta. daughter. 38/4. Mst Riyasat Begum. 38/5. Ms Darefa. 38/6. Mst Shahi Meena. Zakira d/o Amir Bahadur. 44. Amir Akbar s/o Kachkol. 45. Said Zaren s/o Said Rasan. 46/1. Sheraman son. 46/2. Mst Batamana daughter. 46/3. Mst Bahramnd. 46/4. Mst Farhada. 46/5. Mst Khalida. 46/6. Mst Bakhti Afsara 46/7. Mst Jalena daughters of Amir Ghamash resident of Sunigram tehsel Gagra district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. 00 am dated 14/5/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

# Business community to hold solidarity rally

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The business community of Islamabad and Rawalpindi on Thursday announced a solidarity rally in support of the Pakistan Armed Forces and against Indian aggression.

The rally is scheduled to be held on May 10 (Saturday), starting from F-9 Park and concluding at the National Press Club, Islamabad. This announcement was made during a press conference at the National Press Club by Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President of the Islamabad Developers Association.

He was accompanied by Ajmal Baloch, President of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran; Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President of Islamabad Estate Agents Association and Federation of Retailers; former President Chaudhry Rauf; Zahid Rafiq, Sardar Azhar, and other prominent trader leaders from the twin cities.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas stated that in the event of war, the trader community and overseas Pakistanis are ready to offer full financial support for the defense of the country. "Over 90,000 civilians and military personnel have laid down their lives for this country."

The cowardly enemy is now challenging a nuclear state and launching attacks using Israeli-made drones. The time has come to give a befitting response," he said.

He emphasized that the rally, which will begin at 3:00 pm on Saturday, is being organized solely in the national interest, beyond any political affiliation. "This is the army that stays awake so we can sleep. If we have this country, only then do we exist. On Saturday, the entire nation will stand with the Pakistan Army," he added.

Ajmal Baloch, President of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran, said, "The whole nation stands with its armed forces. If we act, India will not dare show its face again. This rally will demonstrate our unity and unwavering support for our soldiers. India must understand not to harm itself or others."

He further said that this will be a historic rally and a massive gathering to express solidarity with the armed forces across the country. "Israeli products have been removed from markets, and traders are now promoting Pakistani goods. We are doing everything possible for the betterment of the Muslim Ummah. We are ready for

martyrdom," he declared.

Former President of Islamabad Estate Agents Association, Chaudhry Rauf, stressed that the time has come for national unity. "Today, the world is condemning Indian media. Pakistan's media is free and independent, and we must win this media war.

We assure our armed forces of our readiness to sacrifice our lives at their command. We reject any water aggression from India and vow to show unity as a nation."

Awais Satti, President of Islamabad Small Traders Association, also pledged full support to the armed forces and expressed readiness to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them at the borders. "We will give a strong and befitting reply to India," he stated.

## PSX stays bearish, loses 6,482 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Thursday, losing 6,482.21 more points on Thursday, a negative change of 5.89 percent, closing at 103,526.82 points as compared to 110,009.03 points on the last trading day.

A total of 653,550,383 shares were traded during the day as compared to 550,076,224 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 35.437 billion against Rs 30.121 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 450 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 35 of them recorded gains and 373 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 42 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 93,253,525 shares at Rs 1.10 per share, Kohinoor Spinning with 28,484,361 shares at Rs 3.94 per share and K-Electric with 27,065,550 shares at Rs 3.92 per share.

PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 639.28 per share closing at Rs 7,032.03 whereas runner-up was Khyber Textile Mills Limited with Rs 60.73 rise in its share price to close at Rs 668.07.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for National Food Security and Research, Malik Rasheed Ahmed Khan on Thursday underscored the vital role of research and development in strengthening agricultural sector for maintaining food safety and security in the country.

The minister visited the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), where the Chairman of PARC and senior scientists from various technical divisions briefed the minister on PARC's operations and its significant contributions through its outstations across the country.

He highlighted the vital role that research and development play in strengthening agricultural sector in the country and reiterated that in line with the Prime Minister's vision and the Green Pakistan initiative the Ministry is fully committed to advancing the agricultural sector through robust research and innovation.

He emphasized, "While the nation stands united in confronting this aggression, we must also remain focused on enhancing our agricultural infrastructure. PARC's work is essential to securing a stable and resilient food supply for our people."

The minister strongly condemned India's recent cowardly attack on Pakistani territory. He reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to defending its sovereignty and declared that Pakistan will respond decisively to any Indian hostilities.

"Pakistan's armed forces are fully prepared to defend and responded swiftly and inflicted significant military losses on the enemy. We will give a fitting reply to Indian aggression", he added.

During the visit, Chairman PARC and senior scientists briefed the Minister on key achievements of the Council. These

included genome-based varietal development for various crops, the establishment of state-of-the-art research facilities such as the National Institute for Genomics and Advanced Biotechnology (NIGAB), a Speed Breeding facility for the development of new crop varieties, and an Aeroponics Complex for virus-free seed potato production.

Additionally, they discussed vaccine development for various animal diseases, including bird flu and lumpy skin disease, as well as agro-ecological zonation efforts across different regions of Pakistan.

# SECP registers 2,956 new companies in April 2025

ISLAMABAD (APP): Corporate growth accelerates as Securities and Exchanges of Commission of Pakistan reports 2,956 new additions to the corporate sector companies in April 2025 bringing the count of total registered companies in the country to 252,321, reflecting growing confidence in Pakistan's corporate sector.

Around 99.9% of the new company registration are now being processed digitally which, marks another step in the Commission's efforts to provide a seamless, tech-driven regulatory environment that promotes transparency and

supports ease of doing business in Pakistan.

Private Limited Companies accounted for 56% of the total new registrations, while single-member companies represented 39%. The remaining 5% included public unlisted companies, not-for-profit organizations, trade organization, and limited liability partnerships (LLPs).

A closer look at sectoral growth reveals strong activity across a range of industries. The Information Technology (IT) and e-commerce sectors saw the largest growth, adding 584 new companies. The trading sector followed with

402 new companies, services with 363 new companies, Real Estate Development & Construction recorded 255 new companies.

Tourism and Transport with 172, food and beverages with 140, education with 131, engineering, fuel and energy, and power generation with 108, cosmetics and toiletries, and chemical with 102, marketing and advertisement with 66, textile with 66, mining and quarrying with 63, corporate agricultural farming with 59, pharmaceutical with 55, healthcare with 49 with new registrations.

Other sectors contributing

to this growth included Communication-allied, Auto and Allied, Sports and Allied, Tobacco, Broadcasting and Telecasting, Steel, Arts and Culture, NBFCs etc. with 341 new companies.

Foreign investment in the corporate sector also showed encouraging signs of growth, with 92 new companies receiving capital from international investors. These investors hailed from a diverse set of countries, including Bahrain, Belgium, China, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and United States.

## Rupee sheds 04 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD, May 8 (APP):The Rupee on Thursday depreciated by 04 paise against the US Dollar in the inter-bank trading and closed at Rs 281.51 against the previous day's closing of Rs 281.47. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 281.75 and Rs 283.25, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.80 to close at Rs 318.02 against the last day's closing of Rs 319.82, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.95, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.67 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 374.12 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 375.79. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 01 and 02 paise to close at Rs 76.64 and Rs 75.05 respectively.

## FCCI chief called on minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI), Rehan Naseem Bharara on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, at the Ministry of Commerce to discuss key issues faced by the business community and explore avenues for trade facilitation.

During the meeting, Bharara highlighted the need for comprehensive reforms, particularly tariff structures

that impact exporters.

He proposed that export-oriented trade associations should be given permanent representation on policy-making boards, ensuring that voices from the ground are included in national trade strategies.

Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan assured the FCCI president of the government's commitment to addressing the concerns of the business community. He acknowledged the need for practical reforms to foster a

more business-friendly environment and support regional connectivity.

Bharara also presented a souvenir to the Minister on behalf of the Faisalabad Chamber in celebration of its Silver Jubilee, marking 25 years of service to Pakistan's trade and industry. The meeting underscored the importance of public-private collaboration in shaping effective trade policy and enhancing Pakistan's export competitiveness.





## Blackout in Dharamshala as IPL match suspended midway over security reasons

NEW DELHI (Agencies): The Indian Premier League (IPL) match between the Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals was suspended after a blackout at the stadium in Dharamshala.

Punjab Kings had reached 10.1 overs in their innings before officials ordered an evacuation due to security concerns.

Earlier, it was reported that the IPL match between Mumbai Indians and Kings XI Punjab, originally scheduled to take place in Dharamshala on May 11, had been relocated to Ahmedabad amid rising tensions between India and Pakistan, according to Indian media reports.

The venue change came as concerns grow over a potential Pakistani attack, prompting authorities to prioritise security arrangements. Reports indicated that Dharamshala airport has been closed as a precautionary measure due to escalating Pakistan-India tensions.

## Pakistan team to feature in Billie Jean King Cup

ISLAMABAD (APP): A four-member team will represent Pakistan in the Billie Jean King Cup/Oceania scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka in June 2025.

According to the Pakistan Tennis Federation, for selection of the Pakistan Billie Jean King Cup team, trials were conducted from May 5 to 7 here at the PTF Tennis Complex. Eight players were invited to participate based on PTF rankings. Ushna Suhail was exempted from the trials due to her recent outstanding performances, said a press release. The selected team members include Sara Mansoor former Pakistan No-1 (captain), Amna Ali Qayum, Meheq Khokar and Sheeza Sajid.

## United coach discusses team challenges after loss

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad United head coach Mike Hesson admitted after their loss to Quetta Gladiators that sudden momentum swings and a slew of absent players cost his side the match.

Speaking at a press conference after the match, Mike Hesson pointed out that key all-rounder Shadab Khan and opener Colin Munro were unavailable, and that Dosan, plus around eleven other squad members, missed the entire season, an ongoing challenge for the club.

"Our performance today wasn't up to the mark," he said. "Our bowlers struggled with both line and length, and we allowed Quetta's batters too much freedom." He reserved special praise for Riley Rossouw, whose fluent innings kept Islamabad United under constant pressure. "Credit must go to Rossouw," Hesson added. "He gave our bowlers almost no chance to settle."

## Gladiators Saud Shakeel praises team's performance after victory

ISLAMABAD (APP): Quetta Gladiators captain Saud Shakeel expressed his satisfaction after his team's win against Islamabad United at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. Speaking at a press conference, he highlighted that winning a trophy depends on performing well on the day of the match.

He also clarified that his focus is on contributing to his team rather than securing a spot in the national squad. Shakeel emphasized that a player's attitude plays a crucial role in cricket, influencing match outcomes. He specifically praised young batter Hassan Nawaz, who had to adjust his position in the team from opener to No. 3, then No. 4. Despite these changes, Nawaz handled pressure well and showcased his talent.

# Pakistan Super League 10 Peshawar-Karachi match in Rawalpindi postponed

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Super League (PSL) fixture scheduled for Thursday at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium between Karachi Kings and Peshawar Zalmi has been postponed, officials confirmed.

"The decision was taken during a meeting involving representatives

of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), franchise owners, and players," a spokesperson of the Karachi Kings told media.

When asked whether the remainder of the tournament could be moved to Karachi or Dubai, the spokesperson said a final decision on the venue shift had not yet been made.

The postponement comes in the wake of rising cross-border tensions, following reports that Pakistan's armed forces shot down multiple Indian drones in several locations, including Rawalpindi and Lahore, since Wednesday night.

Citing security concerns, Aaj News earlier reported

that deliberations were underway to relocate the remaining PSL matches to Karachi, although no official confirmation has been issued so far.

A revised schedule for the postponed match will be announced in due course. An official statement from the PCB is expected soon.



RAWALPINDI: Men ride on a motorbike in front of the Rawalpindi cricket stadium after an alleged drone was shot down.

## FIH Hockey Pro League season resumes next month

ISLAMABAD (APP): With just one month to go until the second half of the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 season resumes, the stage is set for an electrifying finish to the League of the Best.

Starting from June 7 in Spain and Netherlands, the world's top men's and women's national teams will return to action reigniting rivalries and chasing crucial points as the race for Pro League glory intensifies, said a press release.

From Amstelveen to Valencia, Antwerp, Berlin and London, hockey fans can look forward to unforgettable matches across iconic venues in the business end of the competition. Reigning champions Netherlands (women) and Australia (men) will look to defend their crowns, while hungry challengers

aim to upset the order and write new history.

The first half of the season delivered nail-biting matches and left the tables wide open. Every match now carries extra weight, as each win presents an opportunity to climb the table and each loss suffered, an edge handed over to a rival.

Young talents have made headlines in the first half — and they'll be looking to cement their names as household figures by season's end. The teams will also rely heavily on the established superstars to step up in the tense moments that could decide not just matches but the title as well.

With the winning men's and women's teams from the Pro League securing their spot at the upcoming FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium and Netherlands

2026, the teams will be vying for much more than the trophy and bragging rights. In the previous season, Australia men and Germany women secured their spots in addition to the Netherlands and Belgium teams who qualified as hosts. The race is on to see who will join these three men's and women's teams in securing a World Cup 2026 spot this year.

In the first half of the season, all teams played exactly half of their season, 8 matches, and the competition remains wide open. In the men's tournament, England lead the way with 16 points, but an incredibly tight field means they are just 4 points above seventh placed Spain, with Belgium (16 points), India (15), Netherlands (14), Germany (13), Australia (12) placed from second to

sixth spots on the table. Argentina (9) and Ireland (1) occupy the last two spots, but mathematically remain in the battle for the title while needing to ensure avoiding a last place finish to stave off relegation.

In the women's competition, Netherlands lead the way with 19 points from the first half of the season, but Belgium remain hot on their heels trailing the leaders by just 2 points. China (16), Spain (14) and Argentina (14) also remain within catching distance of the leading duo and the fight for the title is bound to heat up over the coming months! India (9), Australia (8), Germany (6), and England (5) trail the leading group and each match will have massive implications on the title race as well as the race to avoid relegation.

## Second Knicks comeback leaves Celtics hanging on



NEW YORK (Agencies): The New York Knicks produced another stunning comeback to win the second game of their NBA Conference play-off semi-final against the Boston Celtics.

Jalen Brunson made two free throws with 12.7 seconds remaining to give New York a 91-90 lead, before Mikal Bridges knocked the ball away to deny Boston a last-gasp chance. Josh Hart had a game-high 23 points for New York, who trailed by 20 points in the third quarter and by 16 in the fourth in Boston.

The Knicks lead the reigning NBA champions 2-0 in the best-of-seven series after finishing 10 wins behind their opponents in the regular season. "I got up there, heard the noise and then I just tried to block everything out. And then I made two," said Brunson - who finished the night with 17 points and a game-high seven assists - on his decisive foul shots.

Karl-Anthony Towns finished with 21 points and 17 rebounds for the Knicks, while Bridges scored all of his 14 points in the fourth quarter. After coming back from 20 points down in an overtime win in game one, New York did not take the lead in game two until the last two minutes.

"We started slowly, got in a big hole, dug our way out and then guys made a lot of tough plays," said Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau. "Our players were at their best when their best was needed down the

stretch." Derrick White and Jaylen Brown each scored 20 points for the Celtics, who will travel to New York for game three on Saturday. "They made the necessary plays to win," Boston coach Joe Mazzulla said of the Knicks. "We put ourselves in position to do that and we just didn't make the plays."

Meanwhile, the Oklahoma City Thunder levelled their semi-final with a 149-106 home blowout win against the Denver Nuggets. After losing on a three-pointer in the closing seconds of game one, Oklahoma City scored 45 points in the first quarter and tied the NBA play-off record for the most points in a half with 87.

MVP favourite Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the game with 34 points before watching the fourth from the bench. "We knew what was at stake tonight," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "We came out desperate." "I didn't really look at tonight as a response as much as I looked at tonight as just us being who we are, and that's how we've been all season," Oklahoma City coach Mark Daigneault said.

After his 42-point performance in game one, Denver's Nikola Jokic tallied just 17 points and eight rebounds in game two before fouling out in the third quarter. "We got punked," Denver interim coach David Adelman said. "They came out with the right intensity and we didn't. We aren't just going to flush this. We have to play better and we know that."

## Beckham and Neville in new Salford ownership group

LONDON (Agencies): David Beckham and Gary Neville are members of a new ownership group at English fourth-tier football club Salford, it was announced Thursday.

The club announced the former Manchester United stars were part of a consortium which also includes a US-based businessman, Declan Kelly, and Mervyn Davies, who was a banker before becoming a UK minister in the Labour government of Gordon Brown from 2009-10.

Salford, in Greater Manchester, is walking distance from United's Old Trafford ground, with Beckham saying Thursday on Instagram: "Salford played such an important role in my life growing up... it's where I bought my first house and where me and Victoria (his pop star wife Victoria Adams) lived."

The 50-year-old added: "I'm so proud to be part of a new ownership group alongside gnevillie2 (Gary Neville) as we begin the next chapter of Salford's journey. "Football is at the heart of this community and I can't wait to see what the future holds for the Ammies."

Neville -- now a high-profile television football pundit, said earlier Thursday: "I am passionate about Salford City. This is a unique partnership with a diverse range of minds and expertise, and held together by a love of football."

# Arsenal fall short again as striker woes haunt Arteta

LONDON (AFP): Arsenal fell short on the big stage again as their painful Champions League semi-final exit against Paris Saint-Germain left Mikel Arteta to rue his club's failure to provide him with enough attacking options.

Arteta's side were unable to reach the Champions League for the first time in 19 years as PSG clinched a tense 2-1 win at the Parc des Princes on Wednesday.

Trailing 1-0 from last week's first leg in north London, the Gunners made a blistering start to the second leg but couldn't convert their chances as Gianluigi Donnarumma's superb saves inspired PSG's 3-1 aggregate victory.

Arsenal were punished for those misses when Fabian Ruiz struck in the 27th minute before Achraf Hakimi's clinical finish in the 72nd minute put PSG on course for the final against Inter Milan.

Bukayo Saka reduced the deficit with 14 minutes left, but it was too late for Arsenal to avoid the latest agonising flop of Arteta's increasingly tortured reign.

Since leaving his role as Pep Guardiola's Manchester City assistant to replace the sacked Unai Emery at the Emirates Stadium in December 2019, Arteta has rebuilt Arsenal after a bleak period prior to his arrival.

The Spaniard has turned Arsenal into serial title contenders and a force to be reckoned with in Europe.

But an FA Cup final victory against Chelsea in 2020 remains Arteta's only

trophy. Losing the biggest game in their recent history leaves Arsenal facing a long summer of regret over their lack of success in the last two transfer windows.

Arteta's Arsenal legacy is in danger of being tarnished by the club's curious decision not to sign a prolific striker. Injuries to Kai Havertz and Gabriel Jesus forced Arteta to use Spain midfielder Mikel Merino as a makeshift striker with mixed results during the final weeks of the season.

But even before Havertz and Jesus were sidelined, Arsenal missed the ruthless cutting edge possessed by Premier League champions Liverpool and elite European teams like PSG.

Arteta had tried to remedy that shortcoming with a move for England striker Ollie Watkins during the January transfer window.

However, Arsenal were unable to convince Aston Villa to accept their £60 million (\$79 million) offer, prompting a frustrated Arteta to admit he was "disappointed" when the window closed without reinforcements.

"We have to be sharper" Arsenal gifted the Premier League title to Liverpool with 13 draws -- six more than Arne Slot's team -- as their lack of killer instinct was exposed.

And as Arsenal poured forward in waves at the start of the second leg against PSG, it was clear what a predatory forward would have added to their vibrant team.

The sight of Saka blazing over with an open goal at his mercy in the closing

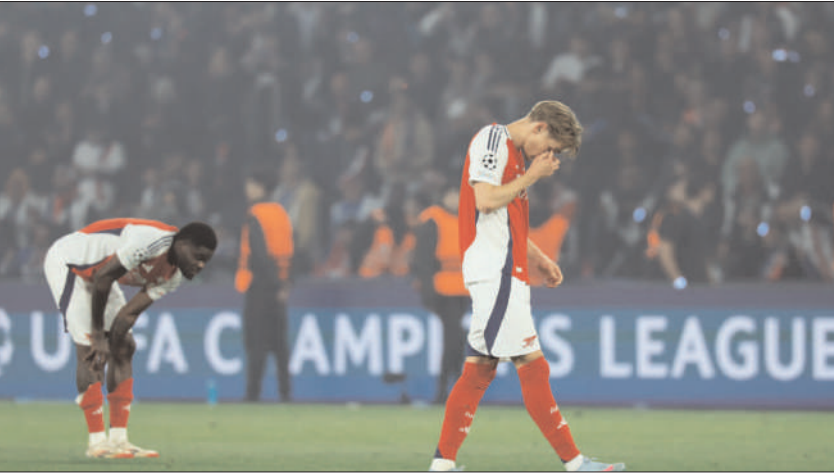
stages perfectly encapsulated Arsenal's attacking woes. Arteta praised Donnarumma as "the best player on the pitch" rather than blame his forwards.

But penalty area profligacy has been a recurring problem for Arteta throughout a reign that has promised more than it has delivered. Without a Premier League title since 2004, Arsenal finished as runners-up to Manchester City for the last two seasons after squandering sizeable leads in the title race.

This season they couldn't keep up with Liverpool's relentless form, so attention switched to the Champions League. When holders Real Madrid were demolished 5-1 on aggregate in the quarter-finals, it seemed Arsenal might win the tournament for the first time to validate the Arteta era.

But that Achilles heel of errant finishing, combined with costly defensive mistakes, proved fatal against PSG. Arsenal midfielder Declan Rice claimed they would need "big balls" and "magic moments" to beat Luis Enrique's men.

Yet as Rice trooped miserably down the tunnel after the final whistle, it was painfully clear what they really needed. "We were not strong enough in the boxes. That's where we lost it," Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard said. "We have to learn from this. We did a lot of good things but it's not enough. "In front of goal is where games are decided and that's where we have to be sharper. We have to use this pain in a good way."



## Swiatek breezes through to Italian Open third round



ROME (Agencies): Defending champion Iga Swiatek cruised through to the Italian Open third round with a crushing straight-set win over Italian wildcard Elisabetta Cocciaretto.

Swiatek won 28 of 35 service points and did not face a break point as she wrapped up a 6-0 6-1 victory in just 52 minutes.

The Polish world number two is seeking a fourth title in five years in Rome, with 18 of her past 19 matches at the tournament being straight-set wins - the exception being when she retired from her 2023 quarter-final with Elena Rybakina. Swiatek will play Danielle Collins in the last 32 after the American beat Elena-Gabriela Ruse of Romania 6-3 6-3.

The 23-year-old - who will bid for a fifth title in six years at the French Open later this month - has reached at least the quarter-finals of her previous eight tournaments, but is yet to win a trophy this season. Japan's Naomi Osaka continued her fine run of form on clay with a 2-6 7-5 6-1 win over Swiss lucky loser Viktorija Golubic.

The 27-year-old has traditionally struggled on clay, failing to make it past the French Open third round, but has now won seven successive matches on the surface. Her victory at last week's L'Open 35 de Saint-Malo was her first clay-court title - and first WTA title on any surface since becoming a

mother in July 2023.

Osaka had been due to play ninth seed Paula Badosa, but the Spaniard was replaced by Golubic because of injury.

The four-time Grand Slam champion will play Brazilian 18th seed Beatriz Haddad Maia or Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic next. Italian Jasmine Paolini is also through to the third round after she defeated New Zealander Lulu Sun in straight sets 6-4 6-3.

Sixth seed Paolini will play Tunisian Ons Jabeur, who advanced via a walkover because Czech Petra Kvitova was forced to withdraw from their second-round tie through injury. The French Open begins at Roland Garros on 25 May.

## Alcaraz '100 percent ready' for return to action in Rome

Spanish world number three Carlos Alcaraz said Thursday he has overcome the injury that has impacted the build-up to his French Open title defence as he prepares to return to action in Rome.

The four-time Grand Slam winner was forced to miss the Madrid Open after he picked up a thigh issue during his Barcelona Open final defeat in April.

"I'm in a good shape. I'm 100 percent ready to start the tournament. So I just can't wait for tomorrow," Alcaraz said ahead of his opening match in the Italian capital against

Serbia's Dusan Lajovic. "I'm really happy to be here in Rome. (It) is the second time that I'm going to play here, so I'm excited."

Alcaraz, 22, missed out on the Italian Open last year due to injury and has only once taken to the courts of the Foro Italico, with his 2023 appearance being cut short at the round of 32 stage by Hungarian Fabian Marozsan.

"Last year was even more difficult," said Alcaraz of his injury-hit clay-court season in 2024, which nonetheless culminated in the Spaniard lifting the trophy at Roland Garros.

"Here (2025), I couldn't play Madrid. But I could play really good tournaments, Monte Carlo, Barcelona, good matches. Right now, yeah, I stop a little bit (Madrid). I just try to recover from the injury, which I wasn't worried (about) at all."

"Right now I have confidence. The practices have been well... Obviously I would say the first round in every tournament is never easy, you have to get used to the conditions, the tournament, the court, everything."

"I think my level is in a good spot," he added.

The headlines at the Rome event have been dominated by the return from a three-month doping suspension of Italy's Jannik Sinner. Alcaraz shared that he was happy to see his rival back in action again and would relish taking on the world number one for the crown in Rome.

"It is great for me, for tennis, for the fans to have him again around," Alcaraz said. "We are in different sides of the draw, hopefully I'm going to meet him (in) the final."





## In brief

### DC Room established

ISLAMABAD (APP): The office of the District Magistrate has announced the establishment of a round-the-clock District Control Room to enhance security measures in the Islamabad Capital Territory. The notification, issued by the Additional District Magistrate here Thursday, highlights the move as a response to the current security situation in the country. Located at the Safe City Project Building in Police Lines, Sector H-11, the new control room aims to provide immediate response and coordination during emergencies. Three dedicated helpline numbers 051-9001521, 051-9001581 and 051-9001584 have been set up to assist residents. Residents are encouraged to use these helpline numbers for any security-related concerns or emergencies.

### Training session conducted

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Language Promotion Department (NLPD) conducted a training session on the use of E-Office Technology. The session took place in the committee room of the department, where Syed Tahir Abbas, Manager Implementation at the National IT Board, provided detailed guidance on the effective use of the E-Office system. The objective of the training was to familiarize departmental staff with the modern system and promote efficiency, transparency, and speed in the execution of official tasks. Addressing the participants, Director General of NLPD, Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, stated that the implementation of the E-Office system was a significant and forward-looking step that would lead to substantial improvements in institutional governance. He emphasized that the use of modern technology would help elevate the performance of government institutions to international standards. He further urged all employees to take this system seriously and make the most of the training to enhance their professional capabilities.

### Conference concluded

ISLAMABAD (APP): The two-day 9th International Conference on "Water Security and Socio Economic Development" was concluded at COMSTECH Secretariat, reaffirming the collective resolve to ensure sustainable water management for a secure future. The Conference was a joint effort of OIC-COM-STECH, Riphah International University, PCRWR, and WATER-Aid and University of Haripur. The closing session of the Conference featured summaries from the six interactive technical sessions which got to the heart not only of what water is, but what it can be: a driver of equality, a solution to the climate crisis, a facilitator of peace, and, much more. Eighty Six research papers/poster presentation were presented by the researchers under six sub-themes included; Environment and Climate Change, Food and Agriculture, Glaciology and Snow Hydrology, Navigating the Challenges of WASH, Circular Water Economy, Policy, and Governance, AI for Water Security. In the closing ceremony the speakers, the speakers appreciated the efforts of the respective Universities and R&D Organizations for holding an iconic conference and hoped that the evidence based recommendations of the conference deliberation will influence our policy framework and to be meticulously implemented.

# ICT admin moves to secure food supply amid border tensions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The district administration of Islamabad was taking measures to ensure the supply of food items continues without disruption following the Indian aggression against Pakistan.

In this regard, the district administration officials have begun preparations to avoid any shortage of fruits, vegetables, and other daily essentials in the markets of the Federal Capital, said the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration here on Thursday.

Meanwhile, an important meeting was held with the Assistant Commissioner Saddar in the chair, focusing on the continued supply of fruits, vegetables, pulses, rice, and other food items during the current regional situation. The

meeting took place with the participation of all key officials from the Market Committee.

The committee reviewed the current stock levels of essential items and discussed plans to maintain an uninterrupted supply. Officials briefed the meeting that there was a sufficient stock of essential items like potatoes, onions, and pulses available for at least 15 days.

The meeting also evaluated the supply chain and discussed emergency response strategies to deal with any sudden disruption in the availability of food items. The aim was to avoid panic buying and maintain stability in local markets.

On the occasion, district administration officials assured that coordination with wholesalers and mar-

ket stakeholders would continue to keep supply consistent. They stressed the importance of regular monitoring and timely decisions to manage stock levels effectively.

The Assistant Commissioner emphasized the need for clear communication between departments to prevent any delays in the transport and delivery of goods. He also urged the committee to remain active and responsive in case of any unexpected situation.

In conclusion, the administration has begun preparing a strategy to deal with any possible shortage of food supplies amid the regional uncertainty. Their goal is to protect public access to essential items and keep prices stable, regardless of rising external tensions.

## Lawyers walk in protest against Indian aggression

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan (SCBAP) led by its President Mian Muhammad Rauf Atta and the 27th Cabinet on Thursday staged a protest walk from Supreme Court of Pakistan building Islamabad to Parliament House (Constitution Avenue) against Indian unwarranted aggression and recent territorial violations, including drone incursions.

A large number of members participated to con-

demn these actions, calling them clear breaches of international law and bilateral agreements like the Indus Waters Treaty.

Protesters expressed full support for the Armed Forces and showed readiness to stand united in defense of the country. They demanded a strong and appropriate response to the provocation, emphasizing the nation's right to safeguard its sovereignty.

In this regard, the Association supports and endorse the call issued by

the Pakistan Bar Council to the entire legal fraternity to observe a countrywide strike on May 09, 2025(Friday) and to stage peaceful protests, sit-ins, pass condemnation resolutions condemning unwarranted aggression, show solidarity with the armed forces and with the families of martyrs and those who got injured. The President and the Executive Committee of SCBAP have requested the lawyers' community to adhere to the call of strike, tomorrow.

## Cigarette Tax Simulation Model 2025-26 launched

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), in collaboration with the Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC), launched "The Price of Health: Cigarette Tax Simulation Model 2025-26." This model provides evidence-based insights into how effective tobacco taxation can improve public health outcomes and generate vital government revenue.

According to the model, if the government increases the Federal Excise Duty (FED) on cigarettes by Rs. 39 per pack in the upcoming fiscal year, it could generate an additional Rs. 67.4 billion in revenue.

Muhammad Asif Iqbal, Managing Director of the Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC), said while presenting the model "Pakistan needs to take bold steps to unlock billions in potential revenue while tackling the public health dangers linked to tobacco use. A Rs. 39 increase in the FED will generate Rs. 67.4 billion—Rs. 58.2 billion from FED and Rs. 9.2 billion from GST. There has been no change in FED since February 2023, and the decrease in the real price of cigarettes due to high inflation has made them

more affordable."

He further noted that cigarette prices in Pakistan remain lower than in many parts of the world. "There is clear evidence that higher tobacco taxes result in lower smoking rates and increased government revenue. Without urgent action, Pakistan could see 490,000 new smokers in the coming year. The government must take decisive steps to sustain progress and protect public health," he urged. Iqbal also pointed out that multinational companies often exaggerate the size of the illicit market, engage in front loading, and under report sales to evade taxes and pressure the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for tax reductions.

He concluded by highlighting that research evidence has shown the tax increase in February 2023 was a win-win policy—it reduced cigarette consumption by over 19%, while revenue from FED and GST increased from Rs. 179 billion in 2022-23 to Rs. 298 billion in 2023-24.

Prof. Dr. Matur Rehman, Dean of Allied Healthcare Sciences at the Health Services Academy (HSA), shared alarming statistics about the health impact of tobacco in Pakistan. He

highlighted that over 160,000 deaths annually are linked to tobacco-related diseases. With 31.6 million adult tobacco users and 17.3 million smokers across the country, Pakistan is facing a major public health crisis—further compounded by the fact that nearly 1,200 children aged 10-14 start smoking every day. The economic burden of smoking in Pakistan is estimated at PKR 615.07 billion, which accounts for 1.6% of the country's GDP.

Mr. Syed Ishfaq Gillani, Chair of the National Action and Coordinating Group against Violence against Women and Children (NACG) and Chief Executive Officer of the United Global Organization of Development (UGOOD), strongly urged the government to prioritize the proposed tax increase in the 2025-26 budget. He emphasized that raising the Federal Excise Duty (FED) on cigarettes would not only support economic growth but also save lives by reducing tobacco use. By implementing this measure, Pakistan can take a significant step toward a healthier and more prosperous future. The health of our future generations is at stake, and this is a challenge we cannot afford to overlook," he stated.

## MNAs pay tributes to armed forces for giving befitting response to India

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentarians in the National Assembly Thursday paid rich tributes to Pakistan armed forces, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) for giving befitting response to Indian aggression and said nation stand united should to shoulder with their forces.

Speaking in the House, they strongly condemned the cowardly attack by Indian forces, calling it a shameful act and Pakistan is fully prepared to respond to any aggression with full force.

The lawmakers said Indian unprovoked attack is not only a serious threat to regional peace and stability, but also a blatant violation of international laws and human rights.

Initiating the debate in the House, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmaker Malik Amir Dogar said that PTI leadership firmly stands with the country's armed forces.

Paying tribute to the Pakistan Air Force (PAF),

Amir Dogar lauded its fitting response to Indian aggression.

He also saluted the martyrs and those injured in the attacks, vowing a resolute reply that "India will remember in the times to come."

PTI legislator Iqbal Afridi strongly condemned the India's attack on civilians under the cover of darkness.

He said the tribal people have always stood at the frontlines in defense of the country and will continue to respond to any form of aggression. "Our forefathers laid down their lives for the sovereignty of Pakistan, and we will uphold that legacy," he added.

Iqbal Afridi said the nation expects a firm and befitting response to the cowardly attack of enemy. He said that national unity is critical in these challenging times, urging all stakeholders to come together and forge a united front.

Pakistan Muslim League

(N) lawmaker Malik Muhammad Iqbal said the Indian attack in Bahawalpur was a direct assault on Pakistan's sovereignty.

He said that the enemy had miscalculated, forgetting that the nation stands united and resilient when the homeland is under threat.

Muhammad Iqbal appreciated Pakistan army for demonstrating its professional strength in defending the country's borders and lauded the PAF for successfully shooting down enemy's aircrafts.

He paid tribute to the martyrs, expressing solidarity with their families, and stressed that Pakistan's desire for peace should not be mistaken for weakness. "We are always prepared to defend our motherland, even if it means sacrificing the last drop of blood," he added.

Senior Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Raja Pervaiz Ashraf paid tribute to all members for demon-



ISLAMABAD: Vehicles and motorcycles on way at Islamabad Expressway during rain.

## Minister inaugurates hospital

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant stride toward enhancing health facilities, Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Khalid Hussain Magsi, inaugurated Al-Kauthar International Hospital in Islamabad on Thursday.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the Minister emphasized that the hospital aims to provide affordable and quality healthcare facilities to the public. He added that the hospital is equipped with state-of-the-art medical technology and a team of experienced doctors to ensure the best possible treatment for patients.

While addressing the media, the Minister strongly condemned the recent acts of aggression by India, stating that the targeting of unarmed civilians, especially women and children, is a cowardly act. He asserted that Pakistan possesses full capability to defend itself and will not tolerate any violations of its sovereignty. "The entire nation stands united with its armed forces and is ready to make every sacrifice necessary," he stated.

The Minister further reiterated Pakistan's commitment to peace and security, highlighting that the country will continue to defend its territorial integrity with strength and resolve. He assured the public that Pakistan's defense forces are fully prepared to respond to any threat and the nation will always stand shoulder to shoulder with its military.

## Seminar held on 'How to Write a Story' by Ahmed Saleem Study Circle

ISLAMABAD (APP): A one-day seminar titled "How to Write a Story" was organized here yesterday by the Ahmed Saleem Study Circle under the supervision of the "Idara-e-Farogh-e-Qaumi Zaban" (National Language Promotion Institute) in Islamabad.

This literary and intellectual gathering was held to honor the scholarly contributions of the renowned researcher, translator, and intellectual Ahmed Saleem and to pass on his ideas to the new generation.

The Director-General of the Institute, Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem

## ITP launches 11th 'Friends of Police' batch

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) formally launched the 11th batch of its 'Friends of Police' internship program, with 30 students from Iqra University joining the initiative aimed at educating youth about traffic laws, road safety, and policing procedures.

An official told APP on Thursday that a total of 30 students from Iqra University have joined the internship program and visited the ITP Headquarters on the first day, under the special directions of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (R) Syed Zeeshan

Haider.

He said the students were briefed on the department's working procedures and toured various sections including the licensing branch, central control room, education unit, and other key departments.

He said the ITP education wing also explained the digital licensing process, the modern traffic management system, and the automated mechanism for issuing fines.

He said the students appreciated the department's technological advancements, transparency, and public facilitation

initiatives, and pledged to support the ITP in law enforcement, awareness drives, and road safety promotion.

He said the program will continue in phases, with students also visiting other Islamabad Police divisions including security, crime investigation, and community policing to gain a broader understanding of policing operations.

He said this initiative is part of ITP's efforts to involve the younger generation in responsible civic behavior and foster stronger community-police relations.

## ANF arrests 8 smugglers with 303 kg of drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting eight operations across the country, recovered as many as 303.769 kg of drugs worth more than Rs 29.1 million and arrested eight suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Thursday.

He informed that 300 grams of hashish were recovered from an accused near a University area in Attock. In another operation, 1 kg of hashish was recovered from a motorcyclist near a restaurant in Mangopir area, Karachi.

The suspects arrested

confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions.

As many as 100 grams of heroin and 4 kg of ice were recovered from a vehicle on University Road, Peshawar, and the suspect was nabbed.

Similarly, 1.144 kg of ice was recovered from the bag of a passenger going to Qatar at Islamabad Airport.

As many as 276 kg of hashish and 10 kg of ice were recovered from a vehicle near Shamkot Toll Plaza, Khanewal and two suspects were arrested.

One kg of heroin was

recovered from a vehicle near the Deputy Wala Interchange, Faisalabad, and the suspect was arrested. As much as 4 kg of ice was recovered from the suspect's bag near Sarwar Shaheed Toll Plaza, Mianwali.

6.225 kg of ice absorbed in books in a parcel sent to Australia was recovered at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore.

Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and an investigation has been initiated.

critical thinking.

The event was coordinated by the famous novelist Khalid Fateh Muhammad, while the organizing team included Dr. Ghazal Yaqoob, Dr. Amjad Kalo, Dr. Humaira Afshaq, and Ms. Annol Fatima.

In the second part of the program, Khalid Fateh Muhammad conducted a training session for young writers, discussing the technical and creative aspects of storytelling, such as character development, dialogue writing, and literary expression.

Students from various universities asked ques-

tions about story writing, to which Khalid Fateh Muhammad provided insightful and guiding responses. He described writing as a product of persistence, observation, and deep study.

During the event, two young students, Amna Nayyar and Annol Fatima, presented their short stories, which were reviewed by the audience, who offered constructive feedback for improvement. At the end of the seminar, certificates were distributed among the participants by Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar and Khalid Fateh Muhammad.

Pakistan and India, the treaty was never suspended or violated.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) lawmaker Shahida Akhtar Ali said Pakistan is a peace-loving country that seeks stability and harmony in the region.

She said India is a terrorist state who is supporting or doing terrorism inside Pakistan.

Shahida Akhtar paid tribute to Pakistan's armed forces for their bravery and for strengthening the country's defense, praising their strong and effective response to enemy.

She said Pakistan is actively fighting the menace of terrorism and expressed confidence that this challenge can be overcome through collective resolve.

Samina Khalid Ghurki said that all political forces in the country stand united to respond any Indian aggression.

She paid tribute to Pakistan's armed forces, and added that our soldiers

are fighting in tough terrain and rendering sacrifices for the defense of the country.

Member of the National Assembly Pullain Baloch condemned India's baseless allegations against Pakistan regarding the Pahalgam incident, and said that no evidence was provided in this regard.

He further denounced the subsequent Indian attacks inside Pakistan, which targeted civilians and places of worship.

PTI leader Aniga Mehdi said the enemy carried out a cowardly attack under the cover of darkness, targeted civilians and mosques.

She praised the timely and effective response of Pakistan's armed forces, which thwarted the enemy's malicious intentions.

Aniga Mehdi affirmed that the nation of 240 million stands shoulder to shoulder with its brave forces and remains united in the defense of the country's borders.



Couple, child drown in pond

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): A man, his wife and child have fatally drowned in a pond in southern Ghazni province, an official said on Thursday. Police spokesman Abu Khalid Sarhadi told Pajhwok Afghan News the drowning deaths occurred when a three-year-old child fell into the pool while playing. The minor's parents tried to pull him out, but due to the water's depth, they drowned and all three died in the Guldara area of Ajristan district.

Expired medicines destroyed

FARAH(BNA): Public Health Directorate reported that 70 tons of expired medicines and food items were collected from the provincial center and surrounding districts over the past six months and subsequently incinerated under official supervision. Head of Farah's Public Health Directorate said that the destroyed materials included 30 tons of medicines and 40 tons of food and non-food items gathered from various locations across the province.

Islamjar, Arazov vow to expand trade ties

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Governor of western Herat province Sheikh Maulvi Noor Ahmad Islamjar has met his Turkmenistan counterpart Begench Arazov during his visit to the country. The two sides discussed expansion of trade cooperation, acceleration of the TAPI gas pipeline project and the utilisation of both countries' capacities in the fields of energy, transit and exports. Herat governor spokesman Mufti Mohammad Yousaf Saeedi said. He said discussions also focused on strengthening trade ties, facilitating the export-import process via the Torgundi border port, and advancing major joint projects, including TAPI.

Governor Islamjar, referring to Afghanistan's recent economic progress, particularly in Herat, said with the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) and the provision of nationwide security, the foundation for economic growth has been laid. He noted that this created a favourable environment for expanding economic relations between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. He emphasised the importance of bilateral cooperation in energy, transportation and marble exports, saying: "Herat is

ready to expand joint cooperation by utilising its existing potential and to jointly benefit from economic opportunities." For his part, Governor of Mary province Arazov welcomed the Afghan delegation led by the Herat Governor and pledged necessary cooperation to enhance trade and transit ties. He also underlined the significance of introducing products from Herat's industrial park into Turkmenistan's markets. The governor of Herat travelled to Turkmenistan three days ago at the head of a delegation comprising local officials and private sector representatives.

Abductee rescued from kidnappers

PARWAN (BNA): The Ministry of Interior has announced the rescue of a person from the clutches of kidnappers in Parwan province, with four individuals arrested in connection to the case.

According to a statement released from the Ministry of Interior, police forces from the Parwan Provincial Command conducted an operation in the Sayed Khail district of the province, during which a person was freed from kidnappers. The individual had been abducted in Kabul province the previous week, and the kidnappers had demanded \$300,000USD for his release. The source added that four individuals related to this kidnapping were arrested in the same province. After initial investigations, they were handed over to judicial authorities.

MoPH urges global support on World Thalassaemia Day

KABUL (Pajhwok): Marking World Thalassaemia Day, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) on Thursday called on international donors to expand their support for combating the blood disorder in Afghanistan.

Doctors explain that thalassaemia is a hereditary genetic disorder passed from parents to children. It causes a significant reduction in red blood cells, leading to symptoms such as mild to severe anemia, bone deformities, stunted growth, and heart complications.

Speaking at a ceremony held in Kabul on Thursday, Deputy Minister of Public Health Maulvi Abdul Wali Haqqani said the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has paid special attention to thalassaemia patients since returning to power. He emphasized the ministry has made thalassaemia care a priority by offering free diagnosis, treatment, care, and blood transfusions to affected individuals. According to MoPH, 5,372 children across Afghanistan are currently



living with thalassaemia. Deputy minister stressed the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing the disease and appealed to international health organizations and humanitarian agencies to enhance their engagement and support in Afghanistan. Dr. Wahdat Alokozai, director of curative medicine at MoPH, said that the ministry plans to establish well-equipped thalassaemia centers not only in Kabul but also in other provinces.

Also speaking at the event, Dr. Amarkhan Pamir, a professor at a private university, reiterated that thalassaemia is an inherited condition that significantly lowers red blood cell count and causes serious health challenges. However, he noted that the disease is neither untreatable nor fatal when appropriate care is available, as is the case in many developed countries. **Voices from patients** Mohammad Qazizada,

a thalassaemia patient who attended the event, shared that he and his three sisters all suffer from the disease. He appealed to international aid organizations to increase support for the treatment and care of thalassaemia patients in Afghanistan. Another patient, Hikmatullah, echoed this request and urged the international community to offer greater assistance for patients across the country.

Over two million passports distributed

KABUL (TOLONews): More than 2.2 million passports were distributed to citizens across Afghanistan during the solar year 1403. Abdul Rahim Hasib, Director General of the Passport Department, stated that over 13 billion afghani in revenue were generated through passport issuance.

Hasib added: "In the year 1403, we distributed 2,272,384 passports. As I've previously mentioned, billions in revenue have been collected and deposited into the Central Bank of Afghanistan." He also highlighted that integrating the electronic ID system with the passport department has simplified the process of correcting names and birthdates. He said: "This issue is now resolved. We are connected to the electronic ID system and receive data directly from the National



Statistics Authority. From now on, there should be no issues regarding errors in printed passports." Meanwhile, some passport applicants who visited the department expressed satisfaction with the improvements and new facilitative measures. Mohammad Hanif, an applicant, told TOLONews: "Last year, the process took six months to a year. Now, I completed my passport

work in just three days. It has become much easier." Sayda Jan, another applicant, said: "If this process is implemented in the provinces as well, people will have better access. I received my passport very quickly, and others are also getting theirs without delays." Currently, demand for passports among citizens has declined compared to previous years.

One-third of population faces hunger

KABUL (TOLONews): The World Food Programme (WFP) has raised concerns over the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, stating that nearly one-third of the country's population is grappling with hunger.

WFP estimates Afghanistan's population to be around 46 million and says it urgently needs \$451 million in funding to continue supporting vulnerable families over the next six months. At the same time, many laborers and street vendors in the capital voiced worries about the worsening poverty and unemployment, saying they struggle to feed their families. Wahid, a 23-year-old who runs a small street stand in Kabul, is among thousands of informal vendors compelled to work daily due to lack of job opportunities and economic support. Wahid told TOLONews: "I'm not being ungrateful, but I can only earn enough to cover basic household expenses like potatoes, onions, and dry bread." Mukhtar, a laborer in Kabul, said: "There is very little work. Many people are unemployed." Abdul Nasir Reshtia, an economic analyst, told TOLONews: "Humanitarian aid, in general, doesn't have high economic effectiveness—it can only temporarily alleviate poverty. However, if economic aid is channeled into development projects, it can have a more significant impact." Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economy said it is working on several projects to improve the country's economic conditions.

Abdul Latif Nazari, deputy minister of economy, stated: "The international community must continue its assistance to the Afghan people. The Islamic Emirate is also prioritizing employment and infrastructure projects." Following the halt of US and other international aid after recent political changes, many global organizations have warned of escalating poverty, unemployment, and hunger in Afghanistan.

147 female prisoners empowered with skills through education

KABUL (Pajhwok): About 147 female inmates at Kabul's Pul-i-Charkhi prison have graduated from religious, literacy, tailoring, agriculture and carpet weaving courses and would be provided with jobs, the Office of the Prisons Administration (OPA) said on Thursday. In a statement, OPA said in order to pay more special attention to legal and human rights of female prisoners, about 147 female prisoners from Pul-i-Charkhi jail had graduated from educational and vocational courses. Some learned holy Quran recitation, 48 prayer jurisprudence, 12 learned biography of Prophet (PBUH), 32 graduated from

literacy, 12 from tailoring, 12 from agriculture and 27 from carpet weaving. At the graduated ceremony, head of education at the prison, Maulvi Nazar Mohammad Naseri, said: "We have provided a good environment for reform and education for all prisoners, and we have turned all prisons into true centers of knowledge and reform". He asked prisoners to participate in the institution's religious, modern, and vocational education programs to improve themselves and earn a legitimate living for their families. Obaidullah Ikhlas, head of economic programs and strategic relations said: "We will provide employ-



ment opportunities for prisoners who participated and graduated from OPA's vocational programs and pay 60 percent of their wages in exchange for work based on their education in prison, so that they could earn a halal living for

their families from prison". At the end of the ceremony, certificates and letters of appreciation were given away to the outstanding students by female teachers of the prison and the Ministry of Education to further encourage them.

Begum Zarghona Ana Dome requires restoration

GHAZNI(BNA): During an inspection of the historic Begum Zarghona Ana Dome, Ghazni's Director of Information and Culture, Mullah Hamidullah Nisar, emphasized the critical need for immediate restoration of this endangered heritage site.

Leading a team of cultural and technical experts, Nisar examined the deteriorating structure located in Jermatu area of Jaghatu district — a relic dating back to the Ghaznavid Empire. He noted that years of governmental neglect and inadequate preservation have left the monument vulnerable to natural decay, with visible structural damage now threatening potential collapse. "The Begum Dome stands as one of our most significant historical landmarks," stated Nisar, confirming that the Ministry of Information and Culture has prioritized its restoration. "Our technical team will submit a comprehensive assessment to the Ministry to ensure reconstruction begins before winter."

Kabul and Tehran discussed cultural ties



KABUL (BNA): In Tehran, Afghanistan's Cultural Attaché Ezzatullah Asif met with Dr. Abdolreza Rashid, Deputy for Cultural Relations at Iran's Organization for Developing International and Regional Relations, to expand bilateral cultural cooperation. The discussions focused on enhancing joint cultural programs, with Asif requesting expanded Iranian support for Afghan cultural initiatives. Dr. Rashid assured increased collaboration, culminating in an

agreement to establish direct communication channels between both nations' cultural institutions. These parallel developments highlight Afghanistan's dual focus on preserving its endangered heritage while fostering international cultural diplomacy. The Begum Dome's planned restoration mirrors growing regional cultural engagement, with Iran emerging as a key partner in safeguarding Afghanistan's rich historical legacy.

Zahir Qadeer faces extradition hearing in Kenya

NAIROBI, Kenya (Amu TV): Zahir Qadeer, a former deputy speaker of Afghanistan's parliament, would appear before a court in Nairobi on Thursday as Kenyan authorities weigh a request from the United States for his extradition on charges related to drug trafficking and illegal weapons possession. Qadeer, who was detained in Kenya nearly a month ago, has denied the charges and characterized the US extradition request as politically motivated. He told the court that his arrest and potential transfer to the United States were driven by his past political stance against foreign intervention in Afghanistan, particularly during the administration of President Trump. Kenyan officials confirmed that Qadeer's arrest was carried out at the request of a US court, which issued a warrant on March 25. The Nairobi court has extended his detention pending a deci-

sion on the extradition request. The Nairobi Times reported on May 3 that Qadeer rejected the extradition as politically charged and called on the Kenyan court to declare the process unjust, repressive, and unconstitutional. In court filings, Qadeer also demanded immediate and unconditional release, arguing that the extradition request lacked sufficient evidence. His attorney, Ndigwa Njiru, told the court that the US request is based only on a warrant and a summary of allegations, not on substantive evidence. Citing Kenya's extradition law, he argued that "the process, though not a full trial, must be supported by preliminary evidence of wrongdoing." No such evidence, he claimed, has been presented. "Allegations without supporting legal documents or expert reports cannot form the basis for depriving a person of liberty or transferring them to another

country," Njiru said. The US has accused Qadeer of conspiring in narcotics trafficking and possessing multiple automatic weapons. He remains in custody under court order while the case proceeds. Qadeer has alleged that the charges are part of a broader plan by his political adversaries to remove him from Afghanistan and silence him abroad. In documents submitted to the court, he claimed to have led a civil movement known as the "Peace Caravan" in Nangarhar Province and to have consistently opposed foreign interference in Afghan affairs. He also referred to his family's political legacy, noting that he is the son of Abdul Qadeer, a key figure in the United Islamic Front and a former vice president in Afghanistan's transitional government, who was assassinated in 2002. "In parliament, I was one of the most outspoken critics of the government,"

Qadeer said in a written statement. "In one speech, I told the president: You were a restaurant worker in America, and we made you president with our votes — we can take those votes back." He claimed that his political activism has made him a persistent target of threats and alleged that the Taliban administration is using fabricated charges through its prosecutor general's office to further silence him. Qadeer denied any involvement in drug trafficking or arms smuggling and said he has never faced criminal charges in Afghanistan or abroad. "I am a law-abiding Afghan citizen," he said. "These accusations are baseless and unfamiliar to me." He also noted that his last visit to the United States was nearly two decades ago and called Washington's sudden interest in extraditing him "strange and troubling."

Excessive use of groundwater in Herat to fuel future water crisis

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): With decreasing rainfall and a shortage of surface water in western Herat province, farmers have increasingly turned to solar-powered systems to extract groundwater for irrigation—an action that has raised concerns about a future water crisis. Several farmers in the province told Pajhwok Afghan News that due to the shortage of surface water, they have been compelled to use underground water to irrigate their farmland. Hamidullah, a farmer from Injil district, said: "We even faced water shortages in the winter. After installing solar panels, we now irrigate our trees and orchards using well water. In just our vil-

lage, more than 15 new wells have been dug in the past year." Azizullah, another farmer from Guzara district, said during water shortages, groundwater was sometimes bought and sold, prompting residents to drill new wells throughout the district. He added that previously, due to water scarcity, crops were grown only once a year. But now, with access to solar water, farmers sow crops in two seasons. He also noted the volume of water extracted from the wells in their village equals that of three water channels daily, yet they still sometimes face shortages. Meanwhile, some residents of the province

expressed concern and called on the caretaker government to manage water consumption and monitor the well-digging process. Mohammad Kabir, a resident of 2nd police district of Herat city, said: "Farmers must use water more carefully. Excessive use of groundwater by farmers is endangering the province's water resources." Said Basir, another resident, warned that since the increase in deep-well drilling, many old wells have dried up. "Some people are using water excessively without considering the future. If this trend continues, we will face a severe water crisis in the near future," he feared. Environmental expert

Hamed Elham expressed concern that solar power was being misused for continuous water extraction, whereas their primary purpose is to provide energy. He said non-stop extraction of water from morning to night using solar-powered pumps causes irreversible damage to water resources. Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Department officials have also warned about the consequences of this trend. Abdul Nasir Naemi, director of department, said that if the current trend continues, drinking water will become difficult to find in the coming years. Wells will need to be dug even deeper, and future generations will face a

major water crisis. He noted that Herat needed 250 millimetres of rain this year, but it received only 140 millimetres so far—intensifying concerns about drought. He urged landowners to avoid using solar-powered systems and groundwater for agricultural irrigation as a way to combat drought and water scarcity. Despite this, farmers in several districts continue to use solar systems for large-scale groundwater extraction, allowing them to harvest crops multiple times a year—a practice that seriously threatens the province's water resources. Mufti Mohammad Yousuf Saeed, spokesperson for the Herat governor, said the provincial govern-

ment was making comprehensive efforts to prevent groundwater levels from dropping. He noted that the Pashtun Dam, now nearing completion, will help ease pressure on underground water sources. He added: "Check dams constructed across various districts and filled during last winter have also played an effective role. Moreover, the local administration is working to modernise agriculture and promote drip irrigation systems, which collectively will help preserve groundwater resources." Matiullah Abid, spokesperson for the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW), told Pajhwok that the ministry has developed

guidelines for the use of groundwater. According to these, citizens across the country can dig deep wells and utilise groundwater—only with legal permission. He stressed that if individuals drill solar-powered wells illegally or use groundwater excessively, other citizens can report them to the ministry or its provincial offices so the authorities can take action. He added that controlling the overuse of water resources is one of the ministry's top priorities. Anyone wishing to drill a deep well must first obtain a permit from the Ministry of Water and Energy. Although solar-powered systems have helped farmers during times of severe

drought, environmental experts believe that if the trend continues unregulated and without proper planning, Herat could face significant water challenges in the future. They emphasise that the time has come for everyone—from farmers to government institutions—to join forces with a shared understanding of water's importance, to find ways that both maintain agricultural productivity and preserve water resources for future generations. Responsible management, awareness campaigns, and the adoption of modern irrigation techniques could be part of the solution to ensure balance between today's needs and tomorrow's sustainability.



# KP to include Thalassemia treatment in Sehat Card Plus

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a major development for thalassemia patients across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Information, announced that the provincial government will formally include thalassemia treatment under the Sehat

gic partners in the fight against the disease.

Calling thalassemia a national and social challenge, Barrister Dr. Saif urged civil society, media, and religious institutions to play a more active role. He encouraged community awareness campaigns through FM radio, social platforms, and mosque sermons. He further disclosed coordi-

the issue a top priority. "Governance works best when the public takes ownership. This is not just a government duty, it is a collective responsibility," he said. Concluding his address, Barrister Dr. Saif praised the role of Alkhidmat Foundation and other organizations, stating that their tireless efforts to serve underprivileged patients were beyond words. "Their reward lies with Allah," he added.

Meanwhile, spokesperson for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, has accused India of backing terrorist elements in the region to fuel sabotage and unrest.

In his official statement on Thursday, the KP Information Advisor said that India is supplying weapons and logistical support to terrorists operating near Pakistan's western border. He said India is engaged in hostile activities on both the eastern and western fronts of Pakistan. "India is providing arms and financial aid to terrorists along the western border. By supporting terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, India is directly involved in destabilizing activities," Barrister Saif asserted.

He continued that Pakistan Army and civilians are united in resisting Indian aggression across both borders. "India's nefarious intentions have been exposed to the world. A strong response to its recent hostilities has become unavoidable," he added. Condemning recent attacks, Saif said, "The cowardly enemy targeted mosques under the cover of darkness. However, the Pakistan Army retaliated strongly, forcing the enemy to wave the white flag and surrender." He concluded by warning India that Pakistan is fully prepared to befitting response for any future aggression: "The cowardly enemy should be ready for our next surprise."



Card Plus as per the vision of ex-Prime Minister and PTI founder Imran Khan. He made this announcement while addressing a World Thalassemia Day event at Alkhidmat Hospital, Peshawar.

The decision was taken after discussions with the Chief Minister, who committed to not only expanding healthcare access to theslemia patients but also confirmed that the provincial government will facilitate NGOs and organizations working in the thalassemia sector. He emphasized that the government will stand by those institutions actively serving patients, recognizing them as strate-

nation with the Ministry of Religious Affairs to ensure imams and religious scholars deliver information-based sermons addressing the causes and prevention of thalassemia.

Barrister Dr. Saif also highlighted the importance of addressing social stigmas around blood donation. "Misconceptions that donating blood weakens the body or is religiously impermissible must be corrected through education and advocacy," he said.

He called for greater public involvement, urging stakeholders to share suggestions and exert positive pressure on the government to keep



ISLAMABAD: Passengers waiting for flights at airport as schedule cancelled by government after Indian drone strikes in many cities.

## PHC extends protective bail of KP minister Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has extended the protective bail of Insaf Lawyers Forum president Qazi Muhammad Anwar and Provincial Minister Nik Muhammad while restrained law enforcement agencies from arresting them, on Thursday.

The counsel Alam Khan Adeenzai argued that Qazi Muhammad Anwar advocate is affiliated with PTI, faces the threat of arrest due to cases registered against him following the November 24 protest in Islamabad. The lawyer stated that the petitioner is unaware of the number of cases registered against him and in which cities. The court had directed the federal government to provide details of cases registered against Qazi Muhammad Anwar. Similarly, Nik Muhammad's lawyer informed the court that the federal government is harassing provincial ministers, which is why they are approaching the court.

Meanwhile, Justice Sahibzada Asadullah asked when these cases would be resolved, to which the lawyer replied that the federal government's harassment is forcing them to approach the court. PHC's divisional bench comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Aurangzeb adjourned the hearing and restrained law enforcement agencies from arresting Nik Muhammad while extending his protective bail.

**PHC issues notice passport deactivation:** PHC divisional bench comprising Justice Naem Anwar and Justice Kamran Hayat has issued notices to the Director General of Passports and PAF authorities, seeking their response to a petition filed by a PAF employee, Fakhr Mahmood, challenging the inclusion of his name in the Exit Control List (ECL) and the deactivation of his passport.

The counsel Danyal Chamkani advocate argued that Fakhr Mahmood joined the PAF as an electrician in 1997 and later moved to Dubai in 2007. He returned to Pakistan in 2021. In 2024, when the petitioner attempted to travel abroad, he was stopped by FIA officials at the airport, who informed him that his passport was blocked due to his name being on the ECL.

## Ukraine accuses Russia of breaking own truce

KYIV: Ukraine has accused Russia of breaking its own unilaterally declared three-day ceasefire hours after it began. Ukraine's air force said on Thursday that Russian aircraft launched guided bombs on the Sumy region of northern Ukraine three times after midnight local time (21:00 GMT), when Vladimir Putin's May 8-10 ceasefire entered into force.

A Ukrainian military spokesman cited by news agency Reuters said a 55-year-old woman had been killed in the attacks on Sumy. Regional rescuers said on Telegram on Thursday that "night shelling" had caused fires to break out in three residential buildings, killing a "civilian" without specifying the exact time when it had occurred. "Predictably, Putin's 'Parade ceasefire' proves to be a farce," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said on X on Thursday, referring to a planned May 9 parade on Moscow's Red Square to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory – along with other Allied countries – over Nazi Germany in World War II.

"Russian forces continue to attack across the entire frontline," Sybiha wrote. "From midnight to midday, Russia committed 734 ceasefire violations and 63 assault operations, 23 of which are still ongoing." The Russian Defence Ministry, cited by Interfax news agency, said that Ukraine, in turn, had carried out 488 attacks on Russian targets and twice tried to break through the border in the Kursk region. The Kremlin has claimed the brief ceasefire, aimed at pausing hostilities during the high-profile WWII commemoration, will "test" Kyiv's readiness for peace but Ukraine has slammed it as a farce.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who has not committed to abide by the truce, insisted on Wednesday that his country stood by its offer to observe a 30-day ceasefire in the war with Russia. "We are not withdrawing this proposal, which could give diplomacy a chance," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address. Russia, he said, had made no response to the 30-day offer except for

new strikes.

The United States, which has placed both countries under pressure to make peace, proposed the 30-day ceasefire in March, but Moscow said the measure could only be introduced after mechanisms to enforce and uphold it are put in place, later proposing the three-day truce as a "humanitarian" gesture. Apart from the three attacks on Sumy with guided bombs, there were no reports in Ukraine of any Russian long-range drones or missiles being launched on Ukrainian cities after the Kremlin-sponsored ceasefire kicked in at midnight, Ukraine's air force said on Thursday.

But Ukraine declared an air alert in its seven eastern regions, stating that there is a danger of Russia using ballistic missiles despite the Kremlin's ceasefire, the air force added. The Kremlin has said Russian forces will honour Putin's order for the duration of the holiday, but will respond "immediately" if Ukraine launches any fire. As part of the anniversary events, Russian President Vladimir Putin is hosting Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders in Moscow and will review a military parade on Moscow's Red Square on May 9.

Hours before Putin's order was scheduled to enter force, Moscow and Kyiv staged aerial attacks, prompting airport closures in Russia and killing at least two people in Ukraine. In Wednesday's video address, Zelenskyy also appeared to acknowledge Ukraine's targeting of Russian sites as the World War II commemorations approached.

"It is absolutely fair that Russian skies, the skies of the aggressor, are also not calm today, in a mirror-like way," he said. On Thursday, the Ukrainian leader marked the day by taking a rare walk in central Kyiv to pay his respects to fallen Ukrainian soldiers at a vast mound of Ukrainian flags planted on the city's central square. He described Putin's May 9 Parade as "a parade of bile and lies. As if not dozens of allied states, but Putin personally defeated Nazism". — Aljazeera

## Trump heralds breakthrough tariff deal with UK

WASHINGTON (Reuters): United States President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday announced a "breakthrough deal" on trade that leaves in place a 10 per cent tariff on goods imported from the UK, while Britain agreed to lower its tariffs to 1.8pc from 5.1pc and provide greater access to US goods.

The agreement announced by Trump from the Oval Office marked the first since Trump triggered a global trade war with a barrage of levies on trading partners following his return to the White House in January. "It opens up a tremendous market for us," Trump said. "This is a really fantastic, historic day," Starmer said by teleconference.

The United States has been under pressure from investors to strike deals to de-escalate its tariff war

after Trump's often chaotic policymaking upended global trade with friend and foe alike, threatening to stoke inflation and start a recession. Top US officials have engaged in a flurry of meetings with trading partners since the president on April 2 imposed a 10pc tariff on most countries, along with higher rates for many trading partners that were then suspended for 90 days.

The US has also imposed 25pc tariffs on autos, steel and aluminium, 25pc tariffs on Canada and Mexico, and 145pc tariffs on China. US and Chinese officials are due to hold talks in Switzerland on Saturday. With the British economy struggling to grow, the tariffs had added to the pressure on his government. Jaguar Land Rover paused its shipments to the US for a month and the government was forced to seize control of British Steel to keep it operating.

The deal will reduce US tariffs on British auto imports to 10pc from the current 27.5pc, according to a UK statement. The lower rate will apply to a quota of 100,000 British vehicles, almost the total exported to the US last year. US tariffs on imports from the struggling UK steel industry will fall to zero from 25pc, while British tariffs on US ethanol will fall to zero from 19pc. Both sides have agreed on new reciprocal market access on beef, with UK farmers given a tariff-free quota for 13,000 metric tonnes. There will be no weakening of UK food standards on imports.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said that Britain is expected to announce a purchase of \$10 billion worth of US-assembled Boeing aircraft, although a White House graphic referred to "aircraft parts".

## North Korea fires missiles off east coast

SEOUL: North Korea has fired a flurry of short-range ballistic missiles into the sea off its east coast, South Korea's military has said, in what Seoul called a possible test of weapons intended for export. North Korean forces launched the missiles from an area near the eastern port city of Wonsan between 8:10am (23:10 GMT on Wednesday) and 9:20am (00:20 GMT), South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said on Thursday.

The missiles flew up to 800km (500 miles) before landing in the Sea of Japan, the JSC said. The launches are the fourth round of ballistic missile tests carried out by North Korea this year, after the firing of several different missile types in January and March. "Our military, under the strong South Korea-US combined defense posture, is closely monitoring various North Korean activities to prevent any misjudgment (by the North)," the JSC said in a statement.

Lee Sung Joon, a JSC spokesperson, said in a briefing that the launches may have been to test the "performance or flight stability" of planned missile exports. Lee did not specify which country might receive the missiles, but Pyongyang has been a key backer of Russia in its war in Ukraine.

North Korea has sent missiles, artillery and some 15,000 soldiers to Russia to support its war effort, according to South Korea's National Intelligence Service. About 4,700 North Korean soldiers have been killed or injured in fighting so far, according to the intelligence service. Pyongyang last month acknowledged the deployment for the first time, with state media quoting North Korean leader Kim Jong Un saying his forces would help "annihilate and wipe out the Ukrainian neo-Nazi occupiers and liberate the Kursk area in cooperation with the Russian armed forces". — Aljazeera

## Israel strikes Lebanon

BEIRUT: Israel conducted heavy airstrikes in south Lebanon on Thursday, hitting targets north of the Litani River in violation of a US-brokered truce. Following the strikes in the Nabatieh region, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun held urgent talks with high-level foreign contacts to halt the Israeli violations.

The airstrikes killed one person, reportedly a senior Hezbollah military leader, and led to multiple injuries, sparking panic in schools, universities and among residents. Aoun followed up on security developments with army chief Gen. Rodolphe Haikal, receiving reports on the areas struck by the Israeli bombardment. The Ministry of Health said that the initial death toll of the Israeli airstrikes on the outskirts of Nabatieh was one, with eight injured.

A source familiar with Aoun's communications told Arab News: "The president's contacts primarily involved the US and French sides, as they are sponsors of the ceasefire agreement and key members of the committee overseeing its implementation." The president reportedly called on the US and France "to pressure Israel to halt its attacks," but the talks "did not yield any concrete guarantees." Israeli jets launched about 19 airstrikes on the area between Kfar Tebnit, Jabal Ali Taher, Nabatieh Al-Fawqa and Kafr Rumman, forming what resembled a ring of fire.

Containing valleys, hills and forests, the area is located about 4 km from the city of Nabatieh, which itself is 56 km from Beirut. The unprecedented Israeli attack on the region, untouched since the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hezbollah took effect on Nov. 27, specifically targeted the Ali Taher area, considered a Hezbollah-controlled security zone.

Hezbollah reportedly lost one of its top military commanders, Abu Hussein Shahrour, who, according to reporters in the region, "was one of the party's key fighters and played a pivotal role in the 1997 Sajid operation against the Israeli occupation." According to Israeli media, a "senior source" in the Israeli army said the military "attacked a significant target in southern Lebanon, consisting of underground infrastructure." Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee said the target "was used to manage the fire and defense systems of the Hezbollah terrorist organization."

According to Adraee, the airstrikes "targeted personnel, combat equipment and wells. The site in question was part of a strategic underground project and was put out of service as a result of the strikes." He added that "the site and activities there are a blatant violation of the understanding between Israel and Lebanon." The Israeli army "will continue to act to eliminate any threat to Israel's security and will prevent any attempt to rebuild Hezbollah's capability."

ities," Adraee said.

The Israeli army's Northern Command said it would maintain its "offensive policy" against Hezbollah. The airstrikes and massive explosions triggered loud bangs that echoed throughout Nabatieh and the south. Residents near the targeted areas rushed to evacuate their children from schools, and most official departments shut down.

Later, the Israeli army opened fire with machine guns on a civilian vehicle on the Odaiseh-Kafr Kila road in the border area. The car sustained damage. However, the female driver and her daughter escaped unharmed. Meanwhile, in the morning, Israeli aircraft dropped leaflets on several areas in the south, resembling banknote-like papers that carried incendiary phrases against Hezbollah. These included: "Hezbollah's dollar is haram (forbidden in Islam) and will not benefit you after it destroyed your house and displaced your family."

Another said: "Do not miscalculate things and do not accept the yellow dollar." Prime Minister Nawaf Salam condemned the Israeli strikes on Nabatieh and said the government was aiming to "put an end to the Israeli violations as soon as possible." He added: "The government has spared no diplomatic effort to stop these actions and ensure Israel's withdrawal from the hills it still occupies."

Salam, accompanied by a ministerial delegation, traveled to Baalbek in the morning on a Lebanese army helicopter and inspected the border plains with Syria. He has repeatedly called for Lebanon to ramp up its border security. Salam called for strengthened security measures during a security meeting at Baalbek Serrail, highlighting the need to "maintain stability and ensure successful municipal elections with complete transparency and integrity" throughout the governorate.

Meeting with local representatives, the premier announced progress on establishing a cannabis regulatory authority, describing it as a pathway "to transition toward a development-based economy benefiting regional residents." Salam was unequivocal that "neither security nor development can function through arbitrary measures." He highlighted the urgent need to resolve transportation challenges between Beirut and the Bekaa Valley, while advocating for Baalbek's restoration as a premier tourist destination in Lebanon.

Salam also visited the Masnaa border crossing with Syria, receiving detailed security briefings from military personnel on site. "The Masnaa crossing serves as a vital gateway for both the Bekaa and Lebanon as a whole. It must operate according to the highest technical and security standards rather than succumbing to disorder or discretionary practices," Salam said. — Arab News

## So far no location targeted in IloJK: Tarar

He informed the house that Pakistan has already shot down five Indian jets and 25 drones, proving its air defense systems' unmatched precision. The wreckage of these drones, scattered across various locations, will be displayed in museums to educate future generations about how Pakistan repelled India's aggression-first forcing its pilots to retreat, then systematically destroying every drone sent its way.

Indian media, in a desperate attempt to hide the truth, initially tried to conceal the wreckage of their downed jets, he said, however, the evidence was undeniable, and the world saw how Pakistan's Armed Forces dominated the skies. Now, India is scrambling to remove the wreckage to save face, he added. "Pakistan's Armed Forces are always ready to respond to any threat. Our defense is strong and secure. The way our air defense system neutralized 25 drones is a testament to our unmatched capability."

He said Pakistan Army has set a new benchmark by using ground-to-

air missiles to destroy drones, reinforcing its dominance in conventional warfare. Attaullah Tarar revealed that India has suffered significant losses at the Line of Control (LoC), with 40 to 50 soldiers killed.

"We're not just talking about a unit-India's entire brigade headquarters was obliterated. In conventional warfare, destroying an entire brigade is a monumental achievement," he said. He said that Pakistan's resounding success in air and ground engagements has not only exposed India's weaknesses but also reinforced the nation's unwavering defense readiness.

He said the enemy should also have dignity. We only targeted the brigade headquarters in our defense, under minus control. On the other hand, India targeted civilian populations. They targeted women and children, and in our response, we shot down their aircraft and destroyed their military installations. This may be their strategy, but Pakistan will never target civilians. Even in war, Pakistan set

examples of magnanimity as its forces know how to respond to the enemy. India, meanwhile, continues to target civilian populations here.

"We were already alert to the enemy's expected aggression. We were also addressing the international media, explaining the situation. When they were seen waving the white flag and the whole world saw them pleading for mercy, saying, 'Stop, our brigade has been destroyed, we have suffered heavy losses'-this white flag was a symbol of Pakistan's victory, a sign of Pakistan's success," he said. While talking about Indian recent action against the Sikhs, he said "I want to make it very clear: it was India's own drone that crashed. The drone that fell over the gurdwara was theirs, and they caused harm to the Sikhs there because they saw that voices were rising across the world, saying no Sikh would fight against the Pakistani military."

He said that the situation created against Sikhs in Canada, the USA, Australia by Indian intelligence, was

being observed by the entire world. He also highlighted Indian malicious intentions, that are to target communities, and provoke their sentiments against Pakistan. He said "I want to remind you of the false flag operations in Pulwama and then Pehalgam." After current incident, India used these fabricated events as justification to attack Pakistan 10 to 12 days later.

"We have responded to this aggression and will continue to do so. Yesterday, the National Security Committee made it clear that the armed forces have been given full authority to choose the time and place of their response and will deliver a strong retaliation." He said that as the military spokesperson said that day, "You may have started this, but we will decide how it ends." Where this matter goes from here-that decision will be ours."

The minister said the international community has noted that even after fifteen days, India has failed to provide any evidence regarding the Pulwama incident. Pakistan has called

for an investigation, but India has refused to conduct one. India itself carried out the attack in Pehalgam and then staged an aggression against Pakistan, attempting to portray itself as the victim-but this tactic will no longer work. India's aggression will be met with a strong response, he warned.

The minister reassured the nation that their security is in very capable hands. Any act of aggression by India will be responded to decisively, but such matters are not handled impulsively. "Operational and strategic decisions are made carefully, and only then is a response given. We have already defeated India in both the military and diplomatic domains."

He informed that after the Pulwama incident, India tried to play the victim, but we did not allow them that opportunity. We stood by the truth and spoke with honesty. Now, the entire world knows that India attempted-and failed-to falsely link Pakistan to Pehalgam. They had no evidence and are now avoiding an investiga-

tion. Pakistan has shown the world how an FIR (First Information Report) is filed-within just ten minutes-while India, with its 900,000 troops stationed in the region, could not prevent the attackers. How did the assailants reach the site when travel is impossible without security checks every two to three kilometers? Are these 900,000 troops only there to oppress Kashmiri Muslims, he questioned?

India is blaming Pakistan for its own security and intelligence failures without providing any proof. The global community has acknowledged that India lacks evidence, he mentioned. "We are a nation that has sacrificed 90,000 lives in the war against terrorism, and the lists of our martyrs remain a testament to our resilience. Our people, police, armed forces, and the children of APS (Army Public School) have laid down their lives for peace". He said we will respond to India's aggression-but we will choose the time, place, and manner of our response. India has already failed in the narrative domain, foreign policy. Now, in a desperate attempt to save face, it is resorting to sending drones.