

Trump says Saudi Arabia's “Recognition of Israel” would honor ‘him’

Trump asserted that under his leadership, the US economy thrived, cementing the nation’s status as a global powerhouse of wealth creation

News Desk

RIYADH: US President Donald Trump made a bold appeal to Saudi Arabia, urging the kingdom to officially recognize Israel at a high-profile investment forum in Riyadh. Trump framed the potential diplomatic move as not only a significant gesture for the region but also a personal honor to him. He expressed hope that Saudi Arabia would soon join the Abraham Accords, a landmark agreement that has already seen several Arab nations establish ties with Israel.

Trump claimed that under his leadership, the US economy had flourished, positioning the nation as a global leader in wealth creation. He reserved high praise for Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, calling him a “remarkable and charismatic” leader. He described the transformation of Saudi Arabia and the



broader Arabian Peninsula, highlighting the region’s growth and development as a testament to the hard work and dedication of its people.

Trump’s visit to Saudi Arabia also yielded a significant policy announcement: the US decision to lift sanctions on Syria. The move, which follows his meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, further complicates the already delicate geopolitics of the region. This gesture was presented as a step towards fostering coopera-

tion, although it has sparked varying reactions from international observers.

The US President also took the opportunity to highlight a series of accomplishments in his tenure, with a particular focus on economic relations. Trump pointed to China’s willingness to reduce tariffs on US goods, a development he called a breakthrough in trade relations. He also touted efforts to open up new markets for American products, underscoring the administration’s broader

agenda of economic expansion and reduced regulatory barriers.

The President’s rhetoric painted a picture of a region brimming with potential, capitalizing on the natural beauty and economic opportunities that have emerged under the Prince’s leadership. Trump reiterated his desire for peace between Pakistan and India and expressed a commitment to preventing wars, emphasizing his broader vision for global peace.

US President also criticized the removal of Houthis rebels from the US list of terrorist organizations, calling it a wrong move. On Iran, Trump warned that if the country ignores peace offers, the US would continue to impose tough sanctions. He praised the recent agreements with the Houthis to halt attacks on maritime vessels, and noted the devastating toll of terrorism in Gaza and Lebanon.

Israeli aid distribution plan despicable: Tom Fletcher

News Desk

NEW YORK: Tom Fletcher, the head of UN humanitarian affairs, has condemned Israel’s aid distribution plan for Gaza as a “despicable scheme.” He pointed out that Israel’s blockade is obstructing the delivery of much-needed aid to the region.

A session of the United Nations Security Council was convened to discuss the dire situation in Gaza, revealing that for the past ten weeks, food, medicine, and other essential supplies have failed to reach the war-torn Palestinian territory.

During the meeting, it was emphasized that immediate actions could save the lives of millions of Palestinians. A stringent mechanism exists to ensure that aid reaches ordinary civilians and does not fall into the hands of Hamas.

French President Emmanuel Macron also weighed in, calling the Israeli Prime Minister’s policies in Gaza “shameful.” He highlighted that half a million people in Gaza are suffering from hunger, urging European nations to consider increasing sanctions on Israel.

Pakistan’s permanent representative to the UN, Asim Iftikhar, expressed grave concern over the hunger faced by Gaza’s residents and called for the immediate lifting of the Israeli siege on the region.

Uncertainty prevails between India-Pakistan: US media

News Desk

WASHINGTON: Uncertainty continues to cloud the border regions between India and Pakistan, despite the recent ceasefire, according to reports from American media outlets. Tensions remain high, especially after the Pahalgam attack which triggered a dangerous escalation between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.

Thousands of civilians who were forced to flee their homes during the flare-up have yet to return, highlighting the fragile and tense atmosphere that persists in border villages on both sides. Citing Pakistani officials, the US media reported that while the ceasefire has helped restore deterrence, the situation remains fluid and unpredictable. The fragile calm, they say, is a result of intense military engagement and backchannel diplomacy, not a sign of lasting peace.

‘Don’t let them in an inch,’ air chief commands from front

Inside a top-secret command center, images of Indian Rafale jets near Bathinda being targeted flash across massive digital screens

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: “Kill them. Don’t let them enter Pakistan’s airspace by even an inch.” These were the commanding words of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu, spoken live over radio to the pilots of the 15 Squadron of the Pakistan Air Force—the very unit he once led himself—as they took to the skies at dawn on 7 May to intercept what many feared was the start of a dangerous escalation.

Inside a highly secured and classified command center, tucked away from the public eye, images of Indian Rafale jets being targeted near Bathinda began to appear on giant digital screens. Tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbors had surged following the 22 April attack in Pahalgam, Indian-administered Kashmir. New Delhi blamed Islamabad for the deadly incident, prompting Pakistan’s air force to enter a state of heightened alert.

But what followed days later was a moment that could define a new chapter in regional security. Sources told the Metro Morning that Air Chief Sidhu took direct command of the situation, operating round-the-clock from the secret neuro-sys-



tem facility for four consecutive days without sleep. On 6 May, after receiving confirmed intelligence reports of an imminent Indian air offensive, he summoned his top brass and ordered active readiness.

It wasn’t a drill. As war clouds gathered, Pakistan moved swiftly from surveillance to active defence. The night of 6 and 7 May became pivotal. According to Pakistani defence officials, India launched more than 80 aircraft from at least a dozen airbases—including 32 Rafale fighters, 30 Su-30s equipped with BrahMos missiles, and various MiG jets. In response, Pakistan scrambled around 40 fighters, including Chinese-made J-10s, now regarded as the backbone of the country’s air defence.

Indian jets reportedly attempted several incursions into Pakistani airspace but

were repelled each time. When missile strikes began hitting civilian infrastructure in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and in Sheikhupura, the Pakistan Air Force launched its “Offensive Counter Air Operations”. As soon as a single Indian missile crossed into Pakistan’s airspace, the Air Chief gave the green light for full retaliation.

What followed was a fierce aerial engagement in which five Indian aircraft were shot down—including three Rafales, one MiG-29, and one Su-30. Urban areas were carefully spared. In just over five hours, the Pakistan Air Force hit 26 targets, including 15 airbases, in response to Indian strikes on three of Pakistan’s bases. Every mission—from take-off, missile deployment, to the safe return of pilots—was closely overseen by Air Chief Sidhu himself from the operations center.

Modi 'himself' requests ceasefire from Trump, reveals US professor

News Desk

WASHINGTON: Fresh revelations have added a surprising layer to the history of Pakistan-India tensions, with Professor Dr. Hassan Abbas of the National Defense University in Washington stating that it was none other than Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi who reached out to then-US President Donald Trump to request a ceasefire. The disclosure sheds new light on the behind-the-scenes diplomacy during a volatile period between the two nuclear-armed nations.

Dr. Abbas delved into the motivations behind Modi’s unexpected outreach. According to the academic, Modi himself initiated the contact with Trump, seeking an urgent de-escalation of hostilities. The admission



turns conventional narratives on their head, especially as India has long projected a posture of strategic dominance in its dealings with Pakistan. Dr. Abbas did not elaborate on the exact timeline, but the comments strongly allude to the military standoff following the Balakot airstrike and Pakistan’s retaliatory actions in 2019.

That chapter remains one of the tensest in recent memory, marked by cross-

border air incursions, international alarm, and media-fuelled brinkmanship.

The claims come at a time when the regional atmosphere remains delicate, with sporadic flare-ups and little progress on sustained dialogue. As such, this revelation could fuel renewed scrutiny over the real dynamics that govern peace and provocation between South Asia’s two most powerful adversaries.

Pakistan, India declare diplomats ‘persona non grata’

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD/NEW DEHLI: Pakistan has expelled a senior official from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, accusing the diplomat of engaging in activities that violate established diplomatic protocols. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed on Monday that the individual had been declared persona non grata and ordered to leave the country within 24 hours.

The decision was formally communicated to the Indian Charge d’Affaires during a strongly worded summons, signaling Islamabad’s intent to draw a hard line over what it describes as unacceptable behavior. The exact nature of the activities cited by Pakistan remains undisclosed, but officials have referred to conduct “incompatible with diplomatic norms,” a term often used in cases involving allegations of espionage or political interference.

While Pakistan refrained from sharing specific evidence, the move marks a serious downturn in diplomatic engagement between the two countries, already weighed down by years of mistrust and unresolved territorial disputes. India responded, mirroring the expulsion with its own diplomatic retaliation. A Pakistani official based in New Delhi was also declared persona non grata and given the same 24-hour deadline to exit Indian soil.

In a terse statement, India’s Ministry of External Affairs noted that the Pakistani High Commissioner had been summoned and handed a formal demarche, accusing the Pakistani official of breaching diplomatic discipline. With both sides expelling each other’s diplomats in less than 24 hours, the move points to a renewed diplomatic chill, one that could hinder future channels of communication at a time when regional stability hangs in the balance.

LNG prices reduced by 13.64pc for May

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The price of liquefied natural gas (LNG) has been reduced by 13.64 per cent for May. According to a notification issued by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), LNG prices for the Sui Northern system have been brought down to \$1.68 per MMBTU, while the rate for the Sui Southern system now stands at \$1.71 per MMBTU.

The notification also noted that, compared to the previous month, LNG prices have dropped by 12.51 per cent for the Sui Northern system and by 13.64 per cent for the Sui Southern system. The new rate for LNG on the Sui Northern system has been fixed at \$11.79 per MMBTU, and for the Sui Southern system, it is now \$10.87 per MMBTU.

OGRA stated that the LNG pricing for May is based on 10 cargoes secured under long-term agreements with Qatar. The decline in LNG prices has been attributed to a fall in global crude oil prices.

Modi's speech adds fuel to fire, says Le Monde

India’s PM Modi declared that punitive measures against Pakistan were merely paused, not withdrawn — a strategic move, as Le Monde suggests, to reassure nationalist voters ahead of a tense political season

News Desk

PARIS: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent remarks have sparked renewed international concern, with French daily Le Monde describing his speech as the equivalent of pouring oil on a fire already out of control. Published on May 13, the report criticised Modi’s belligerent rhetoric, suggesting it was carefully crafted to resonate with headline segments of his support base at home, rather than to promote regional stability.

According to the paper, Modi’s choice of words was far from conciliatory. He declared that punitive measures against Pakistan had only been paused, not withdrawn — a calculated move, as Le Monde suggests, intended to reassure nationalist voters of his government’s muscular posture in the lead-up to a tense political season.

The report did not mince words, painting the Indian leader’s tone as confrontational at a time when tensions between the two neighbours remain on edge. The Kashmir conflict, a



perennial flashpoint between India and Pakistan, remains central to this fragile dynamic. Both nations, armed with nuclear capabilities, have fought multiple wars over the contested region, and cross-border skirmishes remain a tragic routine. The newspaper pointed to this history to underscore the seriousness of Modi’s tone, warning that even a rhetorical escalation could have real-world consequences in a region already under strain.

Le Monde noted that recent diplomatic gestures had offered a brief moment of de-escalation — most notably, a ceasefire agreement that had momentarily cooled tempers. During that pause, then-U.S. President Donald Trump made headlines by

offering to mediate the Kashmir dispute, a proposal that Pakistan welcomed with cautious optimism. However, India rejected the offer outright, asserting its longstanding position that Kashmir remains a bilateral issue, not open to third-party involvement.

As Modi’s speech ripples through international media and diplomatic circles, the underlying question remains: is this political posturing for domestic consumption, or a signal of more aggressive policy to come? Either way, Le Monde’s portrayal of the Indian prime minister’s words as inflammatory underscores the growing anxiety over a region that continues to teeter between uneasy calm and renewed confrontation.

‘We will protect Indus Waters Treaty,’ says Pakistan

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office spokesperson, Shafqat Ali Khan, has firmly rejected provocative statements made by India’s Prime Minister, calling them false. He stated that linking Pakistan’s desire for a ceasefire to any political agenda is untrue, asserting that Pakistan will take all necessary steps to protect its rights under the Indus Waters Treaty.

"India should not misunderstand our resolve for peace," Khan added, warning that any future aggression would receive a decisive response from Pakistan. He further emphasized that Pakistan would closely monitor India’s actions and behavior in the coming days.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar, also weighed in, declaring that if India violated the Indus Waters



Treaty, it would be considered an act of war. He clarified that during tensions, Pakistan did not consider deploying nuclear weapons in retaliation against India, but acknowledged that failure to resolve water disputes through dialogue could jeopardize the ceasefire. Following Pakistan’s counteraction against India, the United States became actively involved.

In a statement released on Tuesday, the Foreign Office spokesperson condemned the Indian Prime Minister’s speech, calling it a

representation of misinformed, political opportunism, and a dangerous disregard for international law. The spokesperson highlighted that such statements reflect a growing tendency to create misleading narratives to justify aggression.

"The claim that Pakistan has sought a ceasefire is another blatant lie," the spokesperson stated, urging India not to make any mistakes and calling on the international community to hold India accountable for its actions.

Indian SC rejects LT’s connection to heroin smuggling

News Desk

NEW DELHI: The Indian Supreme Court has rejected the attempt to link a heroin smuggling case worth 21,000 crore rupees to Lashkar-e-Taiba. The Supreme Court dismissed

the National Investigation Agency’s (NIA) claim that the heroin smuggling case was connected to funding for Lashkar-e-Taiba.

The court stated that the argument presented by the NIA to associate this case with terrorism was prema-

ture and speculative. The court also emphasized that the investigation agency had no solid evidence to connect the accused to any banned organization, and that attempts to link the case with Lashkar-e-Taiba were premature.

JUI leader calls for united front in wake of regional strain

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), has called on the government to convene an All Parties Conference (APC), citing the escalating regional tension triggered by recent developments in India. Speaking in a pointed statement, the seasoned political leader underscored the urgency of unified national dialogue, saying the situation demanded collective political insight and a firm, cohesive response.



Maulana Fazl directly linked the current atmosphere of instability to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of fanning the flames of regional unrest. He claimed that Modi’s actions had not only drawn criticism from within India’s opposition ranks but had also failed to gain the support of minority communities, particularly Muslims

and Sikhs. According to Fazl, this internal dissent further exposed the fragility of Modi’s grip on power.

In his remarks, the JUI leader did not hold back from commenting on Modi’s political standing. He asserted that the Indian premier has lost public support and that his repeated attempts to rally the nation through the Hindutva narrative have fallen flat. Fazl suggested that Modi’s reliance on religious nationalism has reached a breaking point, and in his view, a defeat of ideas should compel Modi to step

down from office.

Turning to foreign policy, Maulana Fazl emphasised the need for Pakistan to forge stronger and more stable relations with Afghanistan. He framed this diplomatic pivot as essential in navigating the current geopolitical landscape, particularly as traditional alliances shift and border tensions intensify. He implied that a stable and cooperative Afghanistan could serve as a strategic partner for Pakistan, especially as India’s regional posture grows more aggressive.

Trump's offer of mediation on ‘Kashmir’ puts Modi in difficulties

The U.S. offer to mediate was viewed as a final attempt to prevent an all-out confrontation, with American diplomatic channels quietly working to ease the tensions

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: U.S. President Donald Trump's offer to mediate the long-standing Kashmir issue has placed India in an increasingly uncomfortable position, drawing sharp reactions from New Delhi while receiving a warm welcome in Pakistan. As reported by the BBC, Trump's intervention came at a particularly delicate moment when the Kashmir conflict between the Kashmir-armed neighbors was teetering on the edge of a potential full-scale war.

The U.S. offer to mediate was seen as a last-ditch effort to avert an all-out confrontation, with American diplomatic channels working behind the scenes to defuse the tensions. The interven-



tion likely played a significant role in preventing the escalation of the conflict, especially in the aftermath of aerial clashes and border skirmishes that had pushed the two countries closer to war.

While Pakistan has embraced Trump's offer, viewing it as a glimmer of hope for resolving the disputed region's future, the response

from India has been markedly negative. Indian officials have voiced strong opposition, accusing the U.S. president of attempting to internationalize the Kashmir issue. India maintains that the dispute is a bilateral matter, firmly rejecting any form of third-party mediation, particularly from a country it perceives as having its own

vested interests in the region.

This divergence in reaction highlights the complexity of the Kashmir issue, where Pakistan has long sought international mediation, while India insists that the matter should be resolved solely through direct talks between the two countries. Trump's offer has thus sparked a diplomatic dilemma for New Delhi, as it grapples with the delicate balance of maintaining its stance on Kashmir while managing the strategic relationship with the U.S.

For Pakistan, Trump's statement represents an opportunity to bring international attention to the issue, something it has long sought in its efforts to highlight the alleged human rights violations in Indian-

administered Kashmir. However, for India, Trump's involvement is seen as a challenge to its sovereignty and a disruption of its established diplomatic narrative.

The situation remains fluid, with both sides evaluating the potential implications of Trump's offer. Whether this mediation proposal becomes a catalyst for renewed dialogue or further entrenches the diplomatic divide remains uncertain, but one thing is clear: the Kashmir dispute continues to be one of the most sensitive and volatile issues in South Asian geopolitics, and any external intervention only complicates the already fraught dynamics between Pakistan and India.

METRO MATTERS

Stalled Red Line project puts lives at risk, says MQM

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Members of the Sindh Assembly from Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) have launched a scathing critique of the provincial government, denouncing what they described as administrative failure and indifference towards Karachi's crumbling infrastructure. In a statement issued from the party's Bahadurabad headquarters, the MQM-P legislators highlighted the long-delayed Red Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project and the hazardous state of University Road as examples of the Sindh government's neglect.

Once touted as a transformative public transport solution linking Mazar-e-Quaid to Safoora Chowrangi, the Red Line BRT has, according to MQM-P, degenerated into a symbol of stalled progress. The lawmakers said University Road now lies in disrepair, reduced to rubble where accidents are a daily reality. Dust pollution chokes neighborhoods, open manholes threaten lives, and the heaps of garbage are fueling a rise in insect-borne diseases.

"Karachi has no one to care for it. Roads resemble ruins, dug up under the guise of development only to be abandoned for years," the statement read. MQM-P accused the Pakistan People's Party (PPP)-led Sindh government of deliberately sabotaging the city's well-being, alleging that development projects are announced with fanfare but rarely brought to completion. Citing the K-IV water project, they noted how its cost has ballooned from crores to billions, yet Karachi continues to suffer a water crisis.

They went further, comparing the PPP's treatment of the city to hostile action. "Where India failed, the PPP succeeded in pushing Karachi to the brink of collapse," the legislators charged, pointing to widespread disruptions caused by the Red Line project, which they said has not only blocked key routes but also interfered with water supply, leaving residents exposed to overflowing sewage and the unchecked spread of pests.

The MQM warned that if government inaction persists, protests may become the only option left for citizens. Stressing Karachi's vital contribution to Pakistan's economy, they said the city — once known as the City of Lights — could reclaim its former stature only if its long-neglected issues are addressed with urgency and honesty. Reaffirming their resolve, the lawmakers pledged to raise Karachi's voice in every legislative forum, asserting that the city's prosperity is inseparable from Pakistan's economic future.

SHC orders corruption probe against SMIU VC

News Desk

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court has ordered the Anti-Corruption Department to launch a formal inquiry into allegations of corruption involving the Vice Chancellor of Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU) and other officials, directing that the investigation be completed within three months.

The directive came in response to a petition filed by three faculty members who accused the university's leadership of misusing authority and engaging in financial mismanagement. The court has tasked the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Establishment with ensuring that the probe is not only thorough but also impartial, with a detailed report to be submitted at the conclusion of the inquiry.

The allegations, though yet to be proven, strike at the heart of concerns long raised about governance lapses and transparency within public universities across Sindh. This latest development has amplified growing unease over how public academic institutions are run, particularly in terms of resource allocation and administrative conduct. With university budgets funded by taxpayer money, the case underscores the pressing need for public accountability and institutional reform.

Observers say the court's decision could mark a turning point in restoring trust in higher education governance if the investigation proceeds without political interference. For now, eyes remain on the Anti-Corruption Department to deliver a fair outcome—one that may set a precedent for dealing with similar complaints in the education sector.

Local hotel hosts study visit focused on hospitality

By Zahid Karani

KARACHI: In a bid to strengthen ties between the education sector and the country's growing hospitality industry, students from the Chef Association of Pakistan visited Hotel Mehran. The visit provided students with vital exposure to real-world hospitality operations and trends, marking a significant step in aligning academic learning with industry needs.

Yasir Ahmed, a hotel's official, offered expert perspectives on hotel management, culinary standards, and customer service, while also outlining the dynamic developments taking place within Pakistan's hotel sector. He stressed the importance of professionalism, innovation, and continuous learning, stating, "The future of Pakistan's hotel industry lies in the hands of our youth. By nurturing talent and connecting students directly with real-world environments, we are investing in the next generation of hospitality leaders."

The Karachi Chef Association and student representatives presented a commemorative shield to Yasir Ahmed, acknowledging his support and dedication. The visit reflected a growing recognition of the need to equip young professionals with practical skills and industry knowledge.

Mayor urges swift action on Lyari Transformation Project

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab, convened a high-level meeting at the Mayor's Office to review and accelerate the Lyari Transformation Project — an ambitious urban renewal initiative aimed at uplifting one of the city's most neglected and historically rich neighborhoods. The project is being touted as a cornerstone of the administration's development vision for equitable and sustainable urban growth in Karachi.

Officials from the National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) presented the proposed implementation framework, which focuses on modernizing civic infrastructure, enhancing public spaces, and addressing socio-economic disparities that have long burdened the people of Lyari. The plan promises targeted upgrades in sanitation, housing, public transport, and community services.

Mayor Wahab made it clear that the time for planning is over and that practical steps must now take center stage.

"The transformation of Lyari is not just a promise — it's a priority," he asserted. Expressing dissatisfaction over delays in finalizing technical paperwork, he instructed the Project Director to complete the feasibility report without further delay and commence on-ground implementation immediately. "Every milestone must be achieved with commitment and urgency," the Mayor stressed, calling for accountability at each stage.

The meeting attended including Project Director Faheem Chachar; Chairman of Lyari Town Nasir Kareem; Municipal Commissioner Lyari Hammad Khan; and elected representatives from the area — all of whom reiterated their support for the project. The gathering highlighted a rare moment of consensus among stakeholders, signaling that Lyari's long-overdue revival might finally gain traction.

Criminal killed in encounter during search operation

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Tension rippled through parts of Karachi as two separate incidents of armed violence claimed the lives of criminal suspects during police operations and confrontations. In the Jehanabad area, a police search operation turned deadly when a group of armed criminals opened fire on law enforcement personnel.

The police retaliated, resulting in the death of one suspect during the exchange. According to officials, his accomplices managed to flee under the cover of chaos, evading arrest. The area was later combed by law enforcement in search of the absconding suspects, though no additional arrests were confirmed at the time of reporting.

Meanwhile, a separate incident unfolded in Quidabad where a routine robbery took a tragic turn. During the attempted heist, a shootout ensued and one of the robbers was fatally shot — not by the police, but by apparent friendly fire. Police reported that the deceased suspect was accidentally gunned down by one of his own companions in the confusion of the crossfire. The remaining robbers fled the scene, triggering a brief panic among nearby residents.

Both incidents add to growing concerns over the frequency of armed encounters and criminal activity across Karachi's densely populated neighborhoods. Law enforcement officials have reiterated their commitment to curbing street crime and conducting targeted operations, although the escape of suspects in both cases highlights persistent gaps in swift apprehension and area control.

PM vows crackdown on tax evaders

The Prime Minister urged the use of modern technology as a vital tool to detect, monitor, and prevent tax evasion across the system

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has ordered an uncompromising crackdown on tax evaders and the internal networks that enable them, in a bid to reshape Pakistan's fragile fiscal landscape. Chairing a high-level review meeting focused on broadening the tax base and ramping up national revenue, he made it unequivocally clear that the era of leniency for tax dodgers is over.

The meeting brought together a host of senior officials — including ministers Azam Nazeer Tarar, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahsan Iqbal, Attaullah Tarar, and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana — and zeroed in on sectors and individuals capable of paying taxes but persistently operating outside the formal economy. Shehbaz Sharif instructed that such individuals must be swiftly brought into the tax net and that there must be strict accountability



for any state officials who enable or ignore such evasions.

The Prime Minister called for leveraging modern technology as a tool to identify, track, and prevent tax theft. He stressed that digital transparency is not only achievable but urgent. With this in view, he issued a firm directive that digital monitoring of high-revenue sectors like cement must be completed by June, a key step in the government's broader digitisation and compliance agenda.

Sharif underscored that increasing the number of taxpayers — not simply raising taxes — is the govern-

ment's core objective. "Our goal is to lessen the burden on the common man by reducing tax rates while broadening the tax base," he said, signalling a policy pivot aimed at equity and efficiency.

He placed special emphasis on the tobacco sector, urging rapid coordination with provincial authorities to ensure that no loopholes allow this highly profitable industry to under-contribute. Furthermore, he instructed legal teams to expedite the resolution of outstanding tax-related court cases, a move intended to reclaim significant national revenue tied up in litigation.

Modi shattered myth of India's superiority: Hina Khar

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader and Member of National Assembly Hina Rabhani Khar has said that the long-held global perception of India's conventional and non-conventional superiority has been proven wrong—not by Pakistan, but by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself.

Referring to the recent military standoff and heightened tensions between two nuclear-armed nations, she cautioned against celebrating military confrontations. "It is not something to take pride in that we defeated India badly," she said, adding, "Two nuclear states faced off—this is not a matter for jubilation but of grave concern."



Speaking during a session of the National Assembly, Khar said the illusion of India's dominance has been dismantled through the choices made by its own leadership, particularly Modi's aggressive posture. She noted that recent events have shown that no one in Pakistan is acting against national interests, pushing back against narratives that frame dissent as disloy-

Khar strongly criticized the idea that Pakistan should accept Indian claims on Kashmir without resistance. "If Modi decides that Kashmir is an integral part of India, are we supposed to lower our heads and accept it?" she asked. She emphasized that Pakistan must not adopt an apologetic stance in matters of national sovereignty and regional integrity.

Dar says world must realize scale of catastrophe

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has revealed that Pakistan's defensive response during the recent escalation with India triggered alarm among world powers, especially the United States, prompting urgent diplomatic outreach to prevent the situation from spiraling into full-blown conflict.

Speaking to an American broadcaster, Dar said that after Indian External Af-

The Foreign Minister emphasized that Pakistan's measured yet forceful response—including the firing of drones and missiles three days after Indian aggression—sent a clear signal of capability and resolve. "What happened to the Indian Air Force was visible to the world. They saw how Pakistan responded. India clearly underestimated the consequences."

On the issue of water, Dar issued a stern warning:



fairs Minister S. Jaishankar held talks with US Secretary Rubio, the latter contacted him on Saturday morning, May 10, at around 8am. At that point, according to Dar, Pakistan's military operation was nearly complete. "Rubio informed me that India was now ready to stand down. I told him that if we are given assurance that India will not strike again, Pakistan will also exercise restraint," said

any attempts by India to unilaterally alter or obstruct Pakistan's water flow in violation of the Indus Waters Treaty would be considered an act of war. "The National Security Committee has made it clear: tampering with the treaty or trying to divert our water will trigger a serious response. At times, nations must take bold decisions in the interest of their sovereignty and future," he said.

Woman alleges abduction, gang rape by influentials in Dadu

By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: A harrowing case has surfaced from Dadu where a 40-year-old woman has accused a group of armed men of abducting her and subjecting her to gang

rape over the course of a week in a remote village in the riverine area of Korai.

The survivor submitted a written plea to the Sessions Court, detailing that she was kidnapped a week ago by armed individuals and taken

to a village dominated by influential figures. There, she alleged, she was repeatedly assaulted. In a disturbing twist, the woman also accused local police of siding with the perpetrators rather than taking action against them.

Al- Syed Makki Madni
Travels & Tours Pvt Ltd.

20 دن
مکمل عمرہ پیک

V: D - 196
Umrah Package

20 دن
اپیشل ماہ محرم / صفر عربی گروپ پیج

ڈائریکٹ ایئر لائن

SHARING
179500

QUINT **QUAD** **TRIPLE** **DOUBLE**
Rs.188250 **Rs.199800** **Rs.213900** **Rs.228400**

سلاواں بیت مکہ ہوٹل
لوہواواں بیت مکہ ہوٹل

گروپ داگ **20 جولائی، 20 اگست**

Air Tickets: **Umrah:** **Visa / Others:**

Contact: Abdul Ghaffar Gaba **Cell No. 0335-1305622**
0313-2675926

UAN 111 786 800
alsyedgroupspg
alsyedgroup
alsyedgroups.com

Shop No.1, Plot # C1-56, Sector II-E, Chowringhi No. 5, Orangi Town, Karachi, Pakistan.

EDITOR: Ehtasham Anwar
Vol. No. 2
Issue. No. 148
Email: news@metro-morning.com
Ziqad 16, 1446 A.H.



Is US fueling dangerous tensions?

In a world that constantly teeters between diplomacy and disaster, it is a disquieting truth that the most powerful office on the planet is held by a man for whom consistency is alien, and responsibility is optional. Donald Trump, who has managed to shape global conversations with the tap of a phone screen, continues to project the United States not as a global leader with moral clarity, but as a spectacle of contradiction. In the delicate theatre of South Asian geopolitics, where stakes are dangerously high, his erratic style is not just embarrassing—it is perilous. Nowhere has this been more troubling than during periods of high tension between Pakistan and India. These are not playground squabbles between rival neighbors. These are flashpoints between two nuclear-armed nations with long, bitter histories and blood-soaked borders.

During one such episode of escalated hostilities, an Indian strike inside Pakistani territory claimed civilian lives, including children. While Pakistan's narrative was met with widespread concern in parts of the world, the response from Washington—especially from its top brass—was callously muted. When the then US Vice President was pressed by CNN to comment on India's aggression and the resultant civilian casualties, her response was so devoid of empathy, so tone-deaf to the gravity of the situation, that even the journalist conducting the interview paused in disbelief. There was no mention of restraint. No call for inquiry. No diplomatic nuance. Just a shrug dressed as a statement. In moments where words matter and global powers are expected to act as steadying forces, such nonchalance betrays not just incompetence but a deeply troubling indifference to human life and regional peace.

And yet, this should not have come as a surprise. Trump's presidency has been one long exercise in dismantling the norms of diplomacy. He has reduced the weight of foreign policy to social media whims, delivering pronouncements from behind a screen rather than a podium. With each unpredictable tweet—now shared on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter—he turns serious geopolitical issues into a series of one-liners and innuendos. The effect is not just unprofessional. It is destabilizing. It is not the first time his reckless communication style has embarrassed the country he represents. His treatment of Ukraine's leadership early in his presidency—where he sought to pressure a foreign ally for political favors while dangling aid money like a carrot—was not just a breach of diplomatic conduct but a deeply corrosive act against the very foundations of mutual respect between nations.

What Trump seems unable, or unwilling, to grasp is that diplomacy is not theatre. It is not a campaign rally. And it certainly is not a social media duel. South Asia, with its deeply entangled history, religious fault lines, and nuclear realities, cannot afford to be managed through performance politics. The slightest misstep—be it a careless remark, an unsanctioned provocation, or a failure to rein in aggression—can lead to consequences far beyond the control of those who sparked them. It is not hyperbole to say that if a conflict were to erupt between Pakistan and India, the entire world would feel the tremors. This is why global powers, particularly the United States, must choose responsibility over partisanship. They must encourage, if not demand, serious dialogue between Islamabad and New Delhi. Dialogue rooted not in the illusion of neutrality but in the pursuit of fairness.

Pretending to play peacemaker while tacitly backing one side serves no one. It only feeds distrust and ensures that the road to peace remains closed. It is here that the question of Kashmir looms large. For decades, the region has existed in limbo—caught between political ambitions and the silenced voices of its own people. The promise of a plebiscite, enshrined in United Nations resolutions, has become a ghost haunting every summit and every skirmish. And yet the people of Kashmir continue to be denied the right to determine their own destiny. India's actions in Kashmir—particularly the revocation of Article 370 and the communications blackout that followed—have raised serious questions about its commitment to democratic values.

When nations like the United States choose silence over scrutiny in response to such actions, they are not just turning their backs on international law—they are actively undermining it. Even treaties that once symbolized shared commitments are now being treated as disposable. Take the Indus Waters Treaty, a cornerstone of Indo-Pak cooperation brokered with World Bank support and held intact since 1960. India's claim to have "temporarily suspended" the treaty is both diplomatically weak and legally unsound. There is no provision within the treaty that permits unilateral suspension. It either exists in full or it doesn't. Anything in between is an invention—one with the potential to disrupt water security in a region already facing climate stress.

At a time when the world faces existential challenges—climate change, poverty, extremism—the last thing we need is a destabilized South Asia. What the region needs is clear-eyed diplomacy and a moral spine.

It needs leaders who understand that peace is not a side project but the main event. And it needs allies who are willing to hold each side to the same standard, no matter the strength of their bilateral trade or the flash of photo ops. There is no room here for silence dressed as diplomacy, for tweets masquerading as policy, or for leaders more concerned with applause than outcomes. The path to lasting peace in South Asia does not run through bluster and brinkmanship. It runs through empathy, restraint, and above all, the unwavering belief that the lives of ordinary people matter more than the vanity of politicians. The world must listen. And the United States, if it still wishes to lead, must learn to speak with purpose once again.

Metro Morning and its policy not necessarily consensus with any writer's thoughts

By S.M. Inam



It is a troubling irony that in a country gasping for better infrastructure, clean water, stable energy, and sustainable growth, more than half of the federal government's development budget sits untouched. As Pakistan trudges through another year of economic hardship, with inflation and uncertainty clouding everyday life, the revelation that only 41 percent of the development funds allocated for the fiscal year 2025 have been spent by April is not just disappointing—it is disgraceful. The numbers, released by the Ministry of Planning, reveal a governance malaise that goes far deeper than a simple delay in paperwork. Between July and April, only Rs448.6 billion out of a revised Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) budget of Rs1.1 trillion has been utilized. That leaves an astonishing 59 percent of funds unlikely to be spent by the end of the financial year on June 30.

These aren't hypothetical figures on a spreadsheet. They represent missed opportunities to build roads, supply electricity, construct water channels, equip hospitals, and bolster livelihoods. These are resources that, if used wisely and efficiently, could have alleviated real and present struggles for millions. The failure to disburse development funds isn't just about delayed bridges or unfinished schools. It is a silent abandon-

ment of citizens who expect, and deserve, tangible progress. From the rural farmer waiting for irrigation systems to be modernized, to the urban family enduring load-shedding due to an underfunded energy grid, the consequences are lived daily. But this is not simply a budgetary issue—it is a damning indictment of administrative paralysis. The worst offenders appear to be the very institutions designed to deliver development.

The provinces and special regions, including the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan, have used a mere 36 percent of their allocated share. This is not a simple oversight; it signals a deeper lack of planning capacity, bureaucratic inertia, and absence of accountability. Even sectors that have been placed high on the national priority list seem caught in a web of inefficiency.

The water resources sector, which was allocated the largest chunk—Rs170 billion—has only managed to spend Rs72.5 billion. In a country where water stress is becoming existential, this underutilization is both baffling and criminally negligent. Likewise, the energy sector, which received Rs94.5 billion, only spent Rs53 billion—just 55 percent of its allotment. These are not minor shortfalls. These are yawning gaps between promise and performance.

Other ministries reveal an equally dismal picture. The Ministry of Environment spent just Rs1.5 billion out of its Rs5.25 billion allocation—this at a time when climate

change is threatening to rewrite the geography of the country. The Planning Commission, which should serve as the engine room for all development, utilized only Rs3.85 billion out of Rs19 billion. Even more alarming is that entire ministries, including Commerce, Communications, Narcotics Control, and Religious Affairs, along with the heavily promoted Special Investment Facilitation Council, failed to spend a single rupee of their development allocations. Not a rupee. This isn't simply a lapse. It's a crisis of governance. And it demands not polite inquiries, but a full public reckoning.

For a nation that repeatedly approaches the IMF and other international lenders with begging bowls, citing an urgent need for financial support, this sort of mismanagement is indefensible. Donors and citizens alike have a right to ask: what happens to the money once it is allocated? Why is the bureaucratic machinery so slow, so unwilling, or so incompetent that it cannot even spend the resources already on hand? Development funds are not meant to sit idle in government vaults or be reshuffled on paper for the next fiscal year. Their purpose is singular—to catalyze tangible progress. Whether it is improving public transport in cities, electrifying remote villages, or ensuring clean drinking water for schools, each rupee not spent is an opportunity squandered. It is a road not built, a dam not constructed, a job not created.

To continue down this path is to choose stagnation. Worse, it signals a lack of political will and bureaucratic commitment to

change. For years, the national budget has become more about announcements than outcomes. Headlines are made in June. Realities are buried by the following April. There is still time—though not much. Authorities must urgently overhaul the way public development funds are administered. This includes fast-tracking project approvals, eliminating red tape, appointing competent managers, and setting strict deadlines for utilization. Transparency must no longer be optional. Every ministry, every department, and every province must be held accountable for the funds they are entrusted with. Parliamentary oversight must become proactive rather than ceremonial. Civil society and media must not tire of asking uncomfortable questions.

In truth, Pakistan cannot afford the luxury of waste—not in the form of corruption, nor in the form of inaction. In a country where tens of millions live below the poverty line, where schools operate without roofs and clinics without medicine, the failure to utilize development funds is not just a technical flaw—it is a moral failing. The tragedy is not simply that 59 percent of development funds might go unspent. The tragedy is that so many lives could have been touched by that money—and won't be. And unless the state wakes up to this quiet crisis, the next budget season will simply bring more numbers, more promises, and fewer results.

The writer is a former government officer and a senior analyst on national and international affairs, can be reached at inam@metro-morning.com

Pro-Pakistan BD bans Awami League

By Uzma Ehtasham



In a dramatic and historic turn, the interim government of Bangladesh has imposed a ban on the Awami League—the political party once heralded as the torchbearer of independence but long since accused of betraying the very ideals it claimed to uphold. With all political activities of the party now suspended until the conclusion of judicial proceedings, and with fresh amendments to the International Crimes Tribunal Act enabling legal action against political entities and their associated institutions, the country's political landscape stands fundamentally reshaped. At the center of this storm is Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the ousted Prime Minister and daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, both of whom have cast long and divisive shadows over the history of the region. For many Bangladeshis—and certainly for observers across the subcontinent—this moment is being read as a reckoning.

A closing chapter in the long, controversial political legacy of a family whose narrative has never been separated from the complex, often painful, birth of Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina's tenure in power, which spanned decades and left few institutions untouched, has ended not with applause or graceful retirement but with banishment and the collapse of her political stronghold. Her removal from power and the outlawing of the Awami League is no small gesture. It is

the clearest signal yet that the status quo has ruptured. While her supporters will undoubtedly attempt to paint her ouster as an act of political vengeance, the broader context cannot be ignored. Hasina's government had grown increasingly autocratic, intolerant of dissent, and aggressively reliant on the patronage of India, to the point where national sovereignty often appeared compromised.

Her alignment with Indian strategic interests, including those that were manifestly anti-Pakistan, fueled long-standing resentment both inside and outside her country. Throughout her rule, Sheikh Hasina cultivated an image of a leader fighting extremism and fostering development. But behind the gloss of high-level diplomacy and infrastructural progress lay a darker undercurrent—one marked by the suppression of religious voices, the judicial persecution of political rivals, and an increasingly stifled press.

Religious scholars were hanged under controversial charges. Opposition figures were jailed or silenced. In every direction, she appeared to wield power not as a custodian of democratic ideals but as a dynastic ruler consolidating her family's control, often with New Delhi's tacit support.

The irony is unmistakable. Sheikh Hasina often spoke of national pride and sovereignty while overseeing a state that seemed more beholden to foreign influence than ever before. Her relationship with India may have secured her international legitimacy among certain circles, but at home, it left deep wounds—political, ideological, and economic. Many ordinary Bangladeshis saw

their country turning into a pliant satellite of Indian policy, while their own voices were increasingly marginalized. But the roots of today's crisis stretch further back, beyond Sheikh Hasina's time in power, to her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Revered by many in Bangladesh but regarded with suspicion in Pakistan, Mujibur Rahman remains a polarizing figure in South Asian history.

To some, he is the founding father of a new nation. To others, he is the man who opened the gates for disintegration, sowing seeds of discord that still bear fruit today. His daughter's political journey, infused with that same spirit of confrontation and isolationism, further entrenched these divisions. Yet history, in its unhurried wisdom, has a way of redrawing the lines. The same forces that once elevated the Awami League now appear to be turning against it. The amendments to the International Crimes Tribunal Act are not mere legal formalities—they are potential instruments of political reckoning. The courtrooms of Dhaka may soon become the arena where decades of grievances are finally articulated and contested. Whether these proceedings will deliver real justice or further inflame divisions remains to be seen.

What is certain, however, is that the age of unquestioned Awami League dominance is over. For Sheikh Hasina, exile is a bitter end to a long and often ruthless political career. It is also a moment of symbolic closure. The leader who once ruled with an iron grip now finds herself unable to remain within the very country she ruled. This is more than a fall from grace—it is an unraveling. A reminder that political power, no

matter how absolute it may appear, is ultimately fragile when divorced from the people it claims to serve. There is a cautionary tale here, not just for Bangladesh but for leaders across the world. When governance becomes a vehicle for personal legacy, when foreign alliances override national interest, and when political dissent is met with persecution rather than debate, the walls eventually close in.

No amount of regional backing or international favor can shield a leader from the consequences of a disconnected and authoritarian rule. As Bangladesh navigates this turbulent transition, the path ahead will not be easy. The country will have to contend with its past, confront its present, and chart a future free from dynastic politics and external manipulation. For now, the banning of the Awami League and the departure of Sheikh Hasina signal the end of an era. Whether this marks the beginning of genuine political renewal or simply another cycle of authoritarianism is a question only time can answer. Still, the message is loud and unambiguous: history may move slowly, but it does not forget. Sheikh Hasina, like her father before her, now finds herself not on the commanding heights of power but at the receiving end of judgment—legal, political, and moral. And for a region so often denied justice, that in itself is a moment of profound reckoning.

The writer is a public health professional, journalist, and possesses expertise in health communication, having keen interest in national and international affairs, can be reached at uzma@metro-morning.com

By Atiq Raja



When we think of money, the image that typically comes to mind is that of paper bills or digital bank balances, numbers flashing across a screen. It is something tangible, something that enables transactions, something that can buy us what we need or want. But what if we began to see money not merely as currency, but as energy—a force, alive with potential that flows through society, shaping our world in ways both subtle and profound? Money, at its core, is a medium of exchange, an instrument of transaction, but beneath its transactional role, it mirrors something much deeper. It reflects human intention. Like energy, it takes the shape we give it. When invested with purpose, money can be a force for good. It builds schools, heals the sick, and nurtures dreams. Money, in its truest form, has the power to create, to propel us forward into a future of possibility.

But when driven by greed or the pursuit of self-interest, money can also be destructive—corrupting individuals, exploiting the vulnerable, and widening the chasm between the rich and the poor. In this way, money mirrors the intentions of those who wield it. Just as energy can either create light or ignite a destructive fire, money too has the potential to either build or break. Every rupee, dollar, or euro that we spend is, in essence, a transfer of our energy. We work, we dedicate our time and effort, and

in exchange, we earn money. It is a reflection of the time we've invested in our lives, and when we spend it, we are essentially passing on that energy to others. Take, for instance, the simple act of buying a book. When you purchase it, you're not simply acquiring paper and ink. You are investing in knowledge, in the intellectual labor of the author, in the creative spark that brought the ideas on those pages to life.

Every transaction, whether large or small, represents an exchange of energy—of time, of skill, and of effort. In this sense, money is much like energy in that it thrives on movement. Just as energy is meant to flow and circulate, money too becomes stagnant and loses its vitality when hoarded or withheld. Shared and circulated, however, money multiplies in its impact, creating ripple effects far beyond the initial transaction. This is the essence of why philanthropy, investment, and conscious spending have the power to transform lives and communities. This principle is reflected in the words of successful entrepreneurs who often say, "You have to spend money to make money." On the surface, this may seem like a simple business strategy, but at its core, it reflects a universal law of energy—that input leads to output. Energy, in all its forms, must be channeled. It must flow. When confined or restricted, it loses its power.

In the same way, when we invest money

in things that will generate value—whether that's through education, health, or business—we are essentially tapping into this energy flow, creating the conditions for further growth. Where your money goes, your energy flows. This simple statement carries profound implications for how we live our lives. If we spend mindlessly on consumption, our energy becomes scattered, dissipating without a clear purpose or direction. But when we choose to invest our money consciously—in education, health, relationships, or causes we believe in—our energy aligns with our values and our future. It becomes a force that propels us toward growth, not only personally but collectively. This shift in perspective can even transform the way we approach budgeting. Instead of simply asking, "What can I afford?" we might ask, "What is worth my energy?"

This subtle but significant change in our thinking can lead to more conscious choices, a deeper sense of fulfillment, and a more meaningful way of relating to money. It asks us to reconsider how we direct our resources, recognizing that money is not just something we acquire—it is something we channel, something we direct toward the creation of the life we want to live. Building what might be called a personal "energy economy" requires an honest audit of where our money—and thus our energy—is going each month. Does our spending reflect our deepest values and long-term goals? Are

we investing in growth and learning, in nurturing our health and relationships? Are we giving generously to causes and people that align with our purpose? Just as energy can be a source of power, so too can money, when used consciously, become a force that not only transforms our own lives but impacts the world around us.

Perhaps the most profound lesson in understanding money as energy is learning to respect its source. Every bit of money we earn represents time and talent—our own energy that has been poured into the world. In this sense, money should not be treated with guilt or fear. It should be treated with care and respect.

When we approach money with this awareness, we begin to see it not as something to be hoarded, feared, or squandered, but as a tool—a tool that can be used to fuel creativity, foster community, and contribute to something greater than ourselves. Ultimately, understanding money as energy shifts the way we view wealth. It's no longer just about earning, saving, or accumulating. It's about channeling energy in ways that fuel creation, growth, and the flourishing of those around us.

So, the next time we handle money, we should pause and ask ourselves: What kind of energy are we releasing into the world? What ripples are we creating, and what future are we building?

The writer is a rights activist and CEO of AR Trainings and Consultancy, with degrees in Political Science and English Literature, can be reached at news@metro-morning.com

The rise of poised power

By Abdul Rehman Patel



There are times when history does not thunder through the battlefield but instead whispers its verdict through restraint, calculation, and clarity. The recent tremors felt across South Asia did not arise from warplanes and wreckage, but from the tectonic shift in perception—of who holds power, who wields it wisely, and who stands dignified when provoked. At a moment when a military flare-up seemed all but inevitable, Pakistan quietly reshaped its identity on the regional and global stage—not with fire, but with focus. India, riding high on nationalist sentiment and grand historical reimaginings, stood center stage with a voice that echoed "Akhand Bharat" fantasies. Propped up by a media frenzy more interested in theatre than truth, it constructed a

narrative of dominance.

The Rafales flew, the broadcasts roared, and the illusion of invincibility reached its crescendo. Yet what followed was not the submission of a smaller neighbor, but a calculated response that unraveled the entire spectacle. Pakistan, often reduced to a headline cliché of instability and decline, did not reply in kind. It did not match noise with noise. Instead, it activated a network of preparedness—where Chinese surveillance, domestic defence upgrades, and cool-headed planning converged into a seamless shield. What unfolded was not a battle in the conventional sense, but an exercise in clarity. Precision over provocation. Strategy over showmanship. It was the kind of response that did not rely on being seen but on being understood.

While India's media lit celebratory fires for imaginary conquests—spinning tales of captured capitals and conquered coastlines—the morning light revealed something else. There were no fallen cities, no fleeing generals, and

no razed harbors. The only collapse was that of a crafted illusion. The psychological terrain had shifted. The storm had passed, but it had taken India's sense of military supremacy with it. This was a win not marked by captured territory or downed jets, but by a redefined identity. Pakistan stood not as a passive bystander nor as a perennial underdog—did it stand as a regional actor with teeth, timing, and the sense not to misstep. The quietness of its strategy only amplified its resonance. For decades, the narrative had been written for Pakistan by others. This time, it wrote its own—measured, precise, and impossible to ignore. The implications go beyond the borders of the subcontinent. This was not an isolated skirmish. It was a statement. The world watched as a state long patronized for its problems revealed a side rarely acknowledged—one of restraint coupled with resilience, and of strategic clarity fortified by growing partnerships. Its alignment with China, its re-engagement with Gulf States,

and the nuanced recalibration from Western powers hint that the chessboard is being rearranged. For India, the aftermath offers fewer victories and more questions. Can military theatrics substitute for actual preparedness? Is the media's patriotic fervor now too detached from strategic realities? And perhaps most discomforting of all—is Pakistan the same adversary it once was? The answer, increasingly, is no. That Pakistan is gone. What remains is a nation surer of its place and more deliberate in its choices.

Modi's aggressive posturing now feels less like power and more like performance. The narrative of Pakistan's erasure has been not only resisted—it has been reversed. And in doing so, Pakistan has redefined what it means to act with strength in a region addicted to spectacle. This moment will not be remembered for the missiles not launched, or for the cities not bombed. It will be remembered for how Pakistan stood firm, steady, and silently eloquent.

The Pakistani-origin American writer and columnist, sheds light on various social and political issues, can be reached at news@metro-morning.com

Tensions with India not expected to cause major economic disruption: Fin Min

Aurangzeb expressed hope that the bailout funds, crucial to Pakistan's financial recovery, will be disbursed today

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister, Muhammad Aurangzeb, has sought to reassure the public and international observers that the escalating regional tensions with India will not lead to significant financial disruption. In an interview with a British news agency, Aurangzeb confidently stated that the situation does not warrant an immediate economic review, signaling that Pakistan's financial outlook remains stable despite the heightened tensions.

The finance minister's remarks come at a crucial time as Pakistan awaits a much-needed financial boost from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Aurangzeb expressed optimism that the bailout funds, which have been a critical component of Pakistan's financial recovery strategy, will be disbursed today. Budget discussions with the



IMF are set to continue between May 14 and 23, with both sides working towards finalizing a plan that will help stabilize the country's fiscal position.

Aurangzeb also took the opportunity to address trade relations, noting that trade issues with the United States are expected to be resolved soon. He revealed that Pakistan is actively seeking to increase its imports from the U.S., with a focus on key commodities like cotton, soybeans, and hydrocarbons. These im-

ports are seen as vital for sustaining Pakistan's agricultural and industrial sectors, which are crucial to the country's economy.

On the regional front, the finance minister emphasized the importance of restoring the Indus Waters Treaty, which India had unilaterally suspended. Aurangzeb's statement underscores Pakistan's ongoing concerns over water security, particularly in light of the strained relations between the two countries. Despite these tensions, the finance

minister expressed cautious optimism, welcoming the recent ceasefire between Pakistan and India, which he attributed to the mediation efforts of U.S. President Donald Trump. He suggested that signs of normalization in relations between the two nuclear-armed neighbours are beginning to emerge, which he described as a positive development for the region.

Domestically, the finance minister acknowledged recent improvements in the Pakistan Stock Exchange, noting a positive performance on Monday. This uptick is seen as a sign of investor confidence, despite the external challenges faced by the country. Aurangzeb reassured the public that Pakistan's national defense needs will be met as necessary, stressing that the government would take whatever steps are required to safeguard the country's interests.

US blogger surprised seeing Pakistanis during Indo-Pak conflict

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: American travel vlogger Drew Binsky expressed his astonishment at the calm and composed attitude of Pakistani citizens amid heightened tensions between Pakistan and India.

Binsky, whose visit to Pakistan was unexpectedly extended due to suspended flight operations during the conflict, shared a video update on Instagram from northern Pakistan, near the Kashmir region—an area often spotlighted in global media during such times.

In the video, Binsky explained that several people had been reaching out with concerns about his safety,



prompting him to reassure followers that he was completely safe. "I'm currently stuck in Pakistan because airports have been shut down due to rising tensions," he said. "But what's really surprising is how peaceful and unconcerned the people around me are."

He observed that despite the regional escalation, the streets remained calm, shops were open, and children were attending school as usual.

He also witnessed public rallies showing support for the Pakistani military, but noted that even these demonstrations were carried out in a composed and orderly manner.

"The people here are incredibly relaxed. Life is continuing as normal, and I'm still out exploring, filming videos, and enjoying the beauty of northern Pakistan," he said.

Qureshi calls for 'political ceasefire'

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi has urged the country's political forces to mirror the ceasefire with India by ending domestic political hostilities.

Writing from Kot Lakhpat Jail, Qureshi addressed the nation in an open letter, calling for a "serious national dialogue" to break the cycle of political confrontation that has gripped the country for months.

His message, penned in a time of heightened regional tension, struck a tone of reconciliation rarely heard in Pakistan's charged political climate.

US imposes sanctions on shipping network selling Iranian oil to China

These oil sales are believed to have financed Iranian-backed Houthi militants in Yemen, responsible for attacks on vessels in the Red Sea, a key global shipping route

News Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States has escalated its economic pressure on Iran by imposing sanctions on a shipping network that facilitated the sale of Iranian oil to China. The US Department of State confirmed that the network played a crucial role in delivering millions of barrels of Iranian crude to China, providing financial backing for Iran's military activities, including its weapons program.

These oil sales are also believed to have funded Iranian-backed Houthi militants in Yemen, who have been responsible for attacks on vessels in the Red Sea—an important global shipping route. According to US officials, the shipping network's operations generated billions of dollars, significantly enriching Iran's state-run military institutions and enabling its destabilizing activities in the region.

The US sanctions target individuals and companies linked to this network, with the aim of cutting off financial resources that could be used to further the country's military and geopolitical ambitions. In a swift response, Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the new



sanctions, calling them counterproductive to the ongoing diplomatic talks. The sanctions, they argue, hinder efforts at engagement and dialogue, particularly in the context of the current nuclear discussions.

Iran's foreign policy officials have repeatedly pointed to the negative impact of sanctions on the negotiation process, claiming that such measures only make it harder to reach a mutual agreement. Notably, the sanctions come at a sensitive time, as the fourth round of US-Iran nuclear talks was held just days ago in Oman. These talks have been framed as a potential avenue for de-escalating tensions and moving toward a broader agreement on Iran's nuclear program, a

longstanding point of contention between the two countries.

With such sanctions being imposed in parallel to the diplomatic negotiations, the chances of a breakthrough appear uncertain, as both sides continue to struggle with trust issues and competing priorities. This latest move signals the United States' continued commitment to curbing Iran's influence in the Middle East, particularly through economic measures aimed at its oil exports. However, it also underscores the complexity of US-Iran relations, where economic sanctions and diplomatic engagement appear to be on a collision course, with little sign of immediate resolution.

Israeli strikes kill 49 innocent Palestinians, including journalist

News Desk

GAZA: Israeli forces have escalated their military operations in Gaza, with reports indicating that at least 49 Palestinians have been killed in the past 24 hours, including a journalist. Among the latest attacks, Israeli forces targeted Al-Nasr Hospital, claiming it was being used as a Hamas command and control center. However, no evidence has been provided to substantiate this allegation.

This attack has drawn significant international condemnation, particularly due to the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. Hospitals, which serve as essential lifelines for civilians caught in the crossfire, have been repeatedly targeted, raising serious concerns about potential violations of international humanitarian law. Medical facilities are struggling to cope with the



overwhelming casualties, and civilians in Gaza are being forced to endure unimaginable suffering.

In response to the worsening crisis, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has called for an immediate end to the blockade on Gaza.

He has urged Israel to allow unrestricted access for humanitarian aid, which is desperately needed to alleviate the growing humanitarian disaster. Similarly, DG WHO Dr. Tedros Adhanom warned that the situation is

rapidly deteriorating, with starvation and a lack of essential supplies already leading to deaths.

Dr. Tedros stressed that the world should not wait for an official famine declaration, as the effects of the ongoing siege are already being felt. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has reached catastrophic levels. With food supplies running low, hospitals facing collapse, and civilians trapped in an ongoing military campaign, the situation grows increasingly dire.

Electricity prices to reduce by Rs5.2 for Karachi consumers

By our correspondent

KARACHI: K-Electric has moved to seek a notable reduction in electricity tariffs for Karachi, filing a petition with the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) for a decrease of Rs5.02 per unit under the monthly fuel price adjustment mechanism for March. If approved, the proposed cut could bring relief amounting to Rs6.79 billion for power consumers in the metropolis, at a time when electricity costs remain a burden for many households and businesses.

The request, however, comes layered with financial complexities. In its petition, K-Electric pointed out that it is still facing substantial outstanding dues—an amount that has now ballooned to Rs14.6 billion. These pending amounts include costs related to power plant start-ups and other operational liabilities. Of this total, NEPRA has already deducted Rs9.4 billion from the monthly fuel adjustments between November and January, effectively trimming down the relief that was due to Karachi's consumers during that time.

NEPRA is set to hold a public hearing on K-Electric's petition on May 22. The decision could set an important precedent—not just in terms of how fuel price adjustments are managed, but also how utilities are held accountable for financial practices that affect millions of consumers. Whether regulatory oversight will favor the utility's cost recovery efforts or heed the concerns of businesses and residents remains to be seen.

Pakistan fighting biggest war against terrorism: Tarar

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Attaullah Tarar, stated that Pakistan is engaged in the biggest war against terrorism. In an interview with foreign media, he highlighted that the recent ceasefire between Pakistan and India is the result of diplomatic efforts from various countries.

Tarar also expressed gratitude towards US President Donald Trump for his role in the ceasefire process. He mentioned that countries such as China, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Turkey, and Qatar had also played significant roles in facilitating the ceasefire. He further added that President Trump had expressed his desire for the resolution of the Kashmir issue in a recent tweet.

The minister emphasized that India has not yet stopped the supply of water to Pakistan, noting that India does not have the capacity to block water. He reassured that the water supply is continuing as usual. Regarding the Pulwama incident, Tarar said that Pakistan had expressed its condolences and offered to cooperate in transparent investigations. However, he pointed out that India had accused Pakistan without providing any evidence.

EOC Sindh under fire as 37,000 children miss polio vaccinations

Instead of addressing critical concerns, the EOC remains fixated on what it calls 'minor improvements,' while fundamental gaps continue to undermine the immunization drive

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in Sindh is once again facing scrutiny after a disturbing revelation that over 37,000 children in Karachi were left unvaccinated during the April polio campaign. This glaring oversight has raised serious questions about the competence and efficacy of the EOC's operations, especially in urban areas where the risk of polio outbreaks remains alarmingly high.

Despite vaccinating over 2.06 million children in Karachi alone, tens of thousands more were missed during the week-long campaign. This significant gap in coverage casts a shadow over the claims made by the EOC, which insists that the campaign performed better than previous efforts. The EOC's attempt to downplay the severity of the situation, citing a reduction in refusal cases and improved community engagement, appears to be an exercise in self-congratulation rather than a genuine reflection of progress.



The official figures also tell a troubling story: over 39,000 refusals were recorded across the province, with parents opting out of vaccination due to deep-rooted misconceptions, lack of awareness, or simply distrust in the system. Yet, instead of addressing these critical concerns, the EOC's focus remains on what it deems as "minor improvements," ignoring the fundamental gaps that continue to plague the immunization effort.

This incompetency in planning and execution has left a dangerous void in the fight against polio. With the virus still detected in environmental samples across major cities, the failure to vaccinate tens of thousands

of children significantly threatens the fragile progress that has been made. Experts have warned that even a small percentage of unvaccinated children can fuel outbreaks, particularly in densely populated areas like Karachi.

As the EOC announces plans for another campaign later this month, public health advocates and experts alike are questioning whether the same mistakes will be repeated or if genuine reform will be implemented. The continued negligence in ensuring comprehensive coverage only highlights a systemic failure that cannot be ignored, especially when the stakes are as high as public health and the eradication of polio.

Operation Bunyan Marsos marks strong stance against India: PM

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stated that the Pakistan Armed Forces have shattered India's illusion of numerical superiority and exposed its arrogance. Addressing the nation after the conclusion of Operation Bunyan Marsos, the Prime Minister said the military operation had sent a clear message to India: that peace cannot be mistaken for weakness and that every nation in the region has the right to sovereignty and security.

"We are a peace-loving nation, but we know how to respond to aggression. Operation Bunyan Marsos is undeniable proof of this resolve," he stated. Shehbaz Sharif's remarks came as Pakistan mourned the loss of 40 innocent civilians, in-



cluding women and children, in the latest Indian aggression. Expressing deep sorrow and solidarity with the victims, the Prime Minister reiterated the state's unwavering commitment to supporting the families of the martyrs.

The Prime Minister confirmed that a formal martyrdom compensation package had already been announced and assured the nation that the care and well-being of the families of those

who laid down their lives for the country would be the state's full responsibility. "We have neither forgotten our martyrs, nor will we ever forget them," he said. Paying tribute to the Pakistan Air Force and Army personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice, the Prime Minister said, "Our brave officers and soldiers kept their promise to defend the nation. I, along with the entire nation, am proud of our martyrs and their families."

Qatar sends 62,000 tonnes of fuel to support Lebanese army

News Desk

DOHA: Qatar has delivered over 62,000 tonnes of fuel to Lebanon as part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen the country's security infrastructure, according to Arab media reports. The final shipment of fuel arrived on Sunday at the Port of Tripoli,

marking the completion of a significant aid package aimed at supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces, which have been struggling with severe resource shortages amid the country's prolonged economic crisis.

Qatari news agency officials described the delivery as a gesture of solidarity with

the Lebanese people, emphasizing that it reflects Qatar's commitment to Lebanon's stability and long-term prosperity. The fuel aid is part of a broader regional initiative by Doha to support struggling institutions in Lebanon, especially those critical to maintaining national security.

Modi's days are numbered, Indians to decide his fate: Kh Asif

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political end is near and that it is now up to the Indian people to decide his future. Speaking to the media outside Parliament House, Asif stated that Modi is facing a "flood of criticism" both inside and outside India's parliament, and his recent attempts to contain the situation in his speech have failed.

Asif asserted that things have spiraled beyond Modi's control and that the Indian Prime Minister's tenure is



now on borrowed time. He reiterated that key points on Pakistan's agenda for any future talks with India would include terrorism, the Kashmir dispute, and the issue of water rights.

Highlighting Pakistan's long-standing struggle against terrorism, Asif said

ing as proxies for India.

The Defence Minister noted that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has already extended an offer to conduct joint investigations into terrorist incidents, urging the global community to acknowledge Pakistan's sacrifices. "We have suffered more losses than any other country," he said.

On the Kashmir issue, Asif stressed that it must remain central in any bilateral discussions, while also calling for the resolution of the water disputes. He warned that India's attempts to politicize water resources or undermine the Indus Waters Treaty will not be tolerated.