



Ready to give strong response if aggression imposed: DG ISPR

Sources confirmed sensitive national security matters were discussed, urging unwavering unity and institutional coordination as regional tensions threaten to test national resolve

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

RAWALPINDI: As tensions rise sharply between Pakistan and India in the aftermath of the tragic Pahalgam attack, Pakistan's military and political leadership have moved swiftly to reassure the public and political stakeholders of the country's preparedness, while reaffirming a commitment to peace in the region.

Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, Director-General of Inter-Services Public Relations, made it clear that while Pakistan desires peace and stability, it will not hesitate to respond with strength if aggression is imposed upon it. His remarks came during a high-level in-camera briefing in Islamabad, where the country's top political leaders were brought into confidence over the evolving national security landscape.

The closed-door ses-



sion, jointly addressed by Federal Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar and the DG ISPR, was convened to inform political representatives about the government's ongoing diplomatic efforts and the operational readiness of the Pakistan Army. Sources confirmed that sensitive national security matters were discussed, with emphasis placed on maintaining unity and institutional coordination amid the growing regional strain.

Key figures from major

political parties attended the session, including Khurram Dastgir Khan, Abid Sher Ali, and Pervez Khattak from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, as well as Dr Farooq Sattar from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement. Provincial leadership was also represented, with Sindh ministers Nasir Husain Shah, Sharjeel Inam Memon, and Saeed Ghani present. Faisal Subzwari from the MQM-P and Shazia Marri of the Pakistan People's Party took part in deliberations that addressed

the broader implications of the crisis.

Notably absent was the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, which had earlier decided not to attend the session. The decision drew criticism from some quarters, given the gravity of the security situation and the pressing need for cross-party solidarity during a time of national challenge.

The background to this heightened tension lies in the April 22 incident in Pahalgam, Occupied Kashmir, where 26 tourists were killed in a brutal attack. India swiftly pointed fingers at Pakistan, an allegation Islamabad has categorically denied. In a series of retaliatory actions, India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, a long-standing water-sharing agreement between the two neighbors, and issued orders for all Pakistani nationals to leave Indian territory immediately.

Pakistan informs Malaysia about Indian propaganda

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has reached out to Malaysia's Foreign Minister, Mohamad bin Hassan, to discuss the latest developments in the region, particularly India's provocative actions and its suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty. In a phone conversation, Dar informed his Malaysian counterpart about the escalating tensions and India's unilateral decision to suspend the treaty, which Pakistan considers a violation of international agreements.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement confirming that Dar rejected India's propaganda, highlighting that the suspension of the treaty is an illegal act that contravenes the legal obligations both countries are bound to. Dar reiterated that Pakistan is committed to maintaining regional peace and security, while safeguarding its sovereignty and the right to defend its national interests.

In response, Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad bin Hassan expressed strong support for Pakistan's position. He also called on both India and Pakistan to show restraint and responsibility, urging both nations to resolve their differences through peaceful means to avoid further escalation.

Congress leader mocks Modi's Rafale purchase as superstition

Rai questioned the inaction, saying, "They keep saying they'll crush the terrorists, but where's the action? What have we really done after Pahalgam, apart from yelling into microphones?"

News Desk

NEW DEHLI: In a scathing critique of the Modi government's military posturing, Congress leader Ajay Rai has mocked India's much-hyped purchase of Rafale fighter jets, likening them to a mere superstition rather than a strategic asset. Speaking at a press conference in Uttar Pradesh, Rai accused the government of being all talk with no tangible action, comparing the jets to traditional Indian superstitions of warding off bad luck with lemons and green chilies.

Holding up a toy Rafale aircraft adorned with these items, Rai ridiculed the ruling party's claims of military might. "We bought the Rafale jets," Rai said, "but they're just standing at airbases with chilies and lemons hanging on them. What are they really doing?" His comments underscored the growing frustration among opposition leaders who view the government's emphasis on military strength as more performative than effective.

The criticism came



shortly after the deadly terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Indian-administered Kashmir, on April 22, which claimed the lives of 26 tourists. The attack has escalated tensions between India and Pakistan, with the Modi government quickly blaming Islamabad and taking punitive measures, including suspending the Indus Waters Treaty and expelling Pakistani nationals from India. In retaliation, Pakistan closed its airspace to Indian flights and called for an international investigation, though India has yet to respond to the offer.

keep saying they'll crush the terrorists," Rai said, "but where's the action? What have we really done after Pahalgam, apart from yelling into microphones?"

The latest criticism from the opposition highlights concerns that the government is using military optics and nationalist rhetoric to deflect attention from the lack of a substantive response to the growing instability in the region. The issue has also drawn international attention, with countries like China, Türkiye, and Switzerland supporting Pakistan's call for a fair and transparent inquiry into the incident, while condemning India's increasingly aggressive stance.

Tarar denies Pakistan's involvement in Pahalgam attack

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Ataullah Tarar has firmly rejected Indian claims that Pakistan is involved in the recent Pahalgam attack, emphasizing that India has failed to garner the international support it had hoped for. Tarar reiterated that Pakistan had no connection to the attack, which killed 26 tourists, and pointed to the history of Pakistan's measured responses to Indian provocations.

"In 2019, we shot down two Indian jets and returned the pilot after offering him tea," Tarar said, referencing the high-profile capture and release of Indian Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman. "If India tries anything like that again, it will get a strong reply." Tarar further



criticized India's attempts to isolate Pakistan on the global stage, claiming that New Delhi's efforts to tarnish Pakistan's image have not been successful.

"When India promotes terrorism around the world, why should anyone talk to them?" he remarked, underscoring the ongoing diplomatic friction between the two countries. The minister also highlighted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's offer to open an investigation into the Pahalgam attack. "We are ready for a transparent investigation into the incident," he stated, stressing that Pakistan remains united in its stance.

Minister Tarar called for a collective national response, stating that it is crucial for the country to present a unified front during this crisis. In addition to addressing the situation with India, Tarar extended an olive branch to political rivals, emphasizing the importance of national unity during times of crisis. "This is not the time to respond to political statements.

Qatar condemns Netanyahu's remarks as 'irresponsible'

Netanyahu criticized Qatar's stance on the ongoing conflict, accusing the nation of contradictory roles while justifying Israel's war efforts

News Desk

DOHA: One considered to be a closed ally to Israel, Qatar, now has strongly condemned recent remarks made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, labelling them as "inflammatory and irresponsible." The Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs called out the accusations of "double game" and "two-faced policy," saying these claims were politically flawed and designed to undermine Qatar's ongoing diplomatic efforts for peace in Gaza.



Netanyahu's statement had criticized Qatar's stance on the ongoing conflict, accusing the country of playing contradictory roles and suggesting that Israel's war efforts were justified. In his response, Dr. Majed Al-Ansari, a spokesperson for Qatar's Foreign Ministry, rejected the notion that Israeli military actions were in any way defensible. He likened Netanyahu's rhetoric to historical authoritarian regimes that used false slogans to justify aggression.

Al-Ansari pointed out the

stark contrast between the ongoing military actions and the reality on the ground in Gaza, which is facing one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern history. "Blockades, hunger, the lack of medicine and shelter—these are being used as tools of political pressure. Is this what is being presented as civilization?" he questioned, highlighting the devastating toll on Palestinian civilians.

Furthermore, Dr. Al-Ansari challenged Netanyahu's claim that military operations were the key to releasing hostages, asking whether the 138 hostages released were the result of Israeli military actions or the outcome of Qatar's mediation efforts, which are now being dismissed. He emphasized Qatar's pivotal role in working with international partners to bring about ceasefires, deliver humanitarian aid, and push for a just peace.

On Qatar's broader foreign policy, Al-Ansari reaffirmed that it is rooted in principles of international law, the protection of civilians, and support for the legitimate rights of Palestinians. He also stressed Qatar's commitment to a political settlement based on international resolutions, which calls for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Netanyahu vows more strikes on Yemen's Houthis

News Desk

OCCUPIED BAITUL MAQDAS: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to intensify military operations against Yemen's Houthi rebels after a missile strike targeted Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv on Sunday morning. The attack, which Israeli officials say originated from Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen, resulted in at least eight injuries and raised alarms over Israel's vulnerability to long-range threats.

The missile, which struck within the airport perimeter, managed to bypass Israel's air defence systems, a rare failure that has prompted renewed concerns about the country's security capabilities. In response, Netanyahu declared, "We have previously targeted the Houthis in Yemen, and now we will increase the intensity of our attacks."

He described the missile strike as a dangerous escalation and signalled that Israel's military response would be more aggressive in the coming days.

Russia calls for dialogue between India, Pakistan

News Desk

MOSCOW: As tensions between India and Pakistan continue to escalate, Russia has once again reiterated its call for a peaceful resolution through bilateral dialogue. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, in a telephone conversation with his Indian counterpart S. Jaishankar, urged both countries to pursue diplomatic avenues in line with past agreements, particularly the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration.



Lavrov's comments came at a critical juncture following the deadly incident on April 22 in the Pahalgam region of Indian-administered Kashmir, where 27 people were killed in a shooting. India quickly accused Pakistan of involvement, although no evidence has been provided to substantiate the claims. In response, India took the dramatic step of suspending the Indus Waters Treaty, further heightening tensions between the two nuclear-

armed neighbours.

In his conversation with Jaishankar, Lavrov stressed Moscow's commitment to regional peace, urging India to choose dialogue over escalation in order to maintain stability in South Asia. He reminded both sides that the path of diplomacy, as outlined in previous agreements, remains the best route to peace and long-term security.

Russia's position underscores the growing international concern over the potential for conflict in the region, and its continued support for dialogue as the preferred solution. The statement reflects Moscow's long-standing diplomatic efforts to foster stability in South Asia, where tensions between India and Pakistan have historically remained high.

Pakistan strongly condemned the incident and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif offered full cooperation in any neutral investigation.

Despite Pakistan's diplomatic posture, India has continued to issue severe threats. Pakistan's civil and military leadership has responded firmly, warning that any Indian adventurism would be met with a crushing response that India would never forget.

UNSC to be briefed on India's aggression against Pakistan

News Desk

NEW YORK: Pakistan has decided to brief the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on the current situation, with a focus on India's recent aggressive actions and their implications for regional peace and security. Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has instructed Pakistan's permanent representative at the UN to convene an emergency session to discuss the matter urgently.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement confirming this decision, which outlines Pakistan's intent to present a detailed account of India's actions, including the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, which Pakistan views as a



direct threat to regional stability.

The briefing will emphasize how these moves undermine peace efforts and escalate tensions in the already volatile region.

The diplomatic initiative comes after a deadly attack on 22 April in Pahalgam, Indian-administered Kashmir, in which 26 tourists were

killed. India quickly accused Pakistan of orchestrating the attack and responded by suspending the Indus Waters Treaty and expelling Pakistani nationals. In retaliation, Pakistan closed its airspace to Indian flights and called for an independent international investigation into the incident—an offer that India has yet to address.

Iran's Araghchi arrives in Islamabad amid India-Pakistan tensions

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Islamabad on an official visit Monday, amid heightened tensions between Pakistan and India.

His arrival marks Tehran's quiet but deliberate entry into the tense South Asian narrative, as regional players grow increasingly concerned about the potential fallout of sustained hostilities between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.

Araghchi was warmly received at Islamabad Airport by Pakistan's Additional Secretary for West Asia, Syed Asad Gilani, alongside Iran's ambassa-



dor and senior diplomatic officials. The reception underscored the importance Pakistan places on this visit, not merely as a bilateral engagement but as part of broader efforts to manage an increasingly volatile regional climate.

According to the Foreign Office, Araghchi is scheduled to meet with President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar during his stay.

These meetings are

expected to focus not only on Pakistan-Iran ties but also on ways to defuse escalating tensions with India, particularly following the deadly Pahalgam attack and subsequent diplomatic fallout.

While Tehran has not officially confirmed whether Araghchi will also visit New Delhi, sources suggest that such a move is being considered, adding weight to speculation that Iran is seeking to play a mediating or stabilizing role in the region. With its longstanding ties to both Islamabad and New Delhi, Tehran occupies a unique space—able to speak to both sides with a degree of credibility and regional understanding.

Houthis missile strikes near Israel’s Ben Gurion Airport

The missile strike set off air raid sirens across central Israel, sending residents scrambling for shelter and disrupting daily life, with several flights canceled and rerouted

News desk

OCCUPIED BAITUL MAQDAS: A ballistic missile launched from Yemen struck close to Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport on Sunday morning, causing significant disruption and injuring at least eight people. The missile, which was fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels, landed within the airport's perimeter, damaging a road and a vehicle. The strike also temporarily halted air traffic, as flights were suspended and several services rerouted.

Israel's air defence system, despite several attempts, was unable to intercept the missile, which



landed in the vicinity of the busy airport. The attack is seen as a significant escalation in the region's ongoing tensions. The Houthis, who claimed responsibility for the strike, explained that it was in retaliation for Israeli airstrikes on Sana'a airport earlier in the week. Houthi military

spokesperson Yahya Saree issued a televised warning, declaring that Ben Gurion Airport was "no longer safe for air travel."

The missile strike triggered air raid sirens throughout central Israel, with residents rushing to seek shelter. The attack disrupted daily life

in the region, leading to the cancellation and rerouting of several flights. Additionally, train services to the airport were briefly suspended, further exacerbating the chaos. This latest escalation highlights the growing tensions between the Houthis and Israel, with the missile strike marking the first time Yemen's rebels have targeted Israeli territory.

The attack raises serious concerns about regional security, particularly given Israel's involvement in the ongoing conflict in Yemen, where it has supported the Saudi-led coalition in its military operations against the Houthis. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz vowed se-

vere retaliation, stating, "Whoever harms us, we will strike them sevenfold." The Israeli government convened an emergency meeting to discuss potential military responses, including targeting Houthi positions in Yemen.

The missile strike came just hours before Israeli Cabinet ministers were scheduled to vote on plans to expand military operations in Gaza, where the ongoing conflict has already resulted in over 52,000 Palestinian casualties and significant displacement. The United States has also been involved in military operations against the Houthis, conducting airstrikes in Yemen to degrade their capabilities.

Man kills wife, son-in-law in Sanghar over ‘Karo Kari’

By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: A man shot his wife and son-in-law in a suspected honor killing case in a village near Sanghar district. The double murder occurred in village 23 Chak, under the jurisdiction of Sanjhor police station. According to initial police reports, the accused used a pistol to kill his wife, Ameeran Bhand, and her alleged paramour and son-in-law, Nadeem Bhand. A child was also injured in the shooting. The suspect fled the scene immediately following the attack. Local police responded swiftly upon receiving information, transporting the bodies to Taluka Hospital Sanjhor for post-mortem examination. Authorities confirmed they are conducting raids to locate and arrest the suspect, though his identity has yet to be disclosed.

MQM-P stages protest against Indian aggression

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: A large protest rally was staged by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) in Korangi 5, Karachi, to denounce what speakers called India's escalating aggression, and to reaffirm unwavering public support for the Pakistan Armed Forces.

The gathering drew a significant turnout from Korangi, Landhi, Malir, Shah Faisal Town, and adjoining areas, underlining the rising sentiments of national solidarity amid growing tensions between Pakistan and India.

Addressing the crowd, MQM MNA Ameer Moeen Pirzada delivered a fiery speech, asserting that the people of Korangi stood ready to cross the border if provoked. "If anyone looks at



Pakistan with malicious intent, we will break through the border and march to India," he said, warning New Delhi of consequences should it violate the Indus Waters Treaty. "We've already shut down Indian airspace and halted trade. If needed, we will destroy their dams and liberate Kashmir."

Member of the Sindh Assembly Shariq Jamal echoed these sentiments, accusing India of "water terrorism" by blocking water supplies and vowing that

Pakistanis would defend their resolve to united their rights. "Our strength lies in our faith. Our nation and army are not weak. Every missile we've built is for a day like this."

Provincial lawmaker Najam Mirza accused Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government of deceiving its own citizens with false flag operations, saying, "If war is imposed on us, we will ensure that the tables are turned. Our response will be decisive."

PTI in LK protest demands Imran's release

By Sudhir Ahmad Afridi

KHYBER: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) staged a protest demonstration at Bacha Khan Chowk in Landi Kotal Bazaar, demanding the immediate release of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and other political detainees. The protest saw significant participation from PTI workers, local leadership, members of the Insaf Students Federation (ISF), and representatives from the Insaf Youth Wing.

The rally featured several speakers, including Abdul Razzaq Shinwari, Molana Shoaib Qadri (focal person to Provincial Minister Muhammad Adnan Qadri), Chairman Abu Darda Shinwari, Fakhruddin Shinwari, Mehrab Shah Afridi, and ISF's Basit Ali and Nizamuddin, along with Youth Wing leaders Sajjad Khan, Jafar Ali, and Sheramat Khan Afridi. They strongly condemned the "unjust imprisonment" of Imran Khan, calling it a theft of the public mandate.

Abdul Razzaq Shinwari and other speakers declared Imran Khan as the true representative of the people, and emphasized that his detention, without conviction, was politically motivated. They accused the establishment of orchestrating schemes, through their "pawns," to punish Imran Khan for crimes he did not commit and to coerce him into a deal. "Imran Khan is not like other so-called leaders who compromise or collapse under pressure—his morale and spirit remain unshaken," they stated.

Child dies in locked car in Khairpur

By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: A seven-year-old boy tragically died of suffocation in a parked car in Faiz Gunj town, Khairpur district, after his parents allegedly forgot him while attending a wedding ceremony. The incident occurred in the village of Mushgool Khan Baladi, where the parents left their sleeping child inside the vehicle and went to join the wedding festivities. It was two hours later when they realized their son was missing. They rushed back to the parked car, only to find the child unconscious in the back seat.

Despite immediate efforts to transport him to a nearby medical facility, the boy could not be revived. The death has caused immense grief and outrage within the local community, with many attributing the tragedy to the parents' negligence. The incident has reignited concerns over the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles, especially during the current heatwave sweeping through upper Sindh.

As of now, authorities have not provided any information regarding potential legal action. This tragic event serves as a stark reminder of the potential hazards of neglect and the importance of vigilance, particularly when it comes to the safety of children in extreme weather conditions.

Fed Min to receive Rs519,000 increased monthly pay

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has promulgated four new ordinances, one of which significantly increases the salaries of federal ministers and ministers of state, aligning them with those of National Assembly members (MNAs).

The amended ordinance revises the Federal Ministers and Ministers of State (Salaries, Allowances and Privileges) Act, 1975, setting the monthly salary for federal ministers and ministers of state at Rs519,000, the same as that of MNAs. Previously,

federal ministers earned Rs200,000 per month, while state ministers received Rs180,000. The new salary structure will take effect from January 1, 2025.

President Zardari issued an ordinance to establish the National Agri-trade and Food Safety Authority (NAFSA), which aims to oversee sanitary and phytosanitary measures for imports and exports. Another key ordinance, the Tax Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025, was introduced to recover pending tax amounts currently involved in litigation.

Cycle rally in Karachi calls for halt to LNG projects

By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: In observance of World Environment Day, the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF), in collaboration with the Indus Consortium, organized a Youth Cycle Rally near Korangi Fish Harbour on Sunday, aimed at opposing the rapid expansion of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) projects in Pakistan.

The rally was a vibrant demonstration of resistance, with both male and female

and social costs of LNG projects far outweigh any potential benefits.

Fatima Majeed, Senior Vice President of PFF, addressed the gathering, warning that LNG projects, often marketed as cleaner fuels, are far from environmentally friendly. "LNG extraction, processing, and transportation are causing severe environmental damage, harming coastal ecosystems and local livelihoods," she said, highlighting the unsustainable nature of these projects.



youth, along with men and women from fisherfolk communities, actively participating.

Carrying placards, banners, and flags, the participants chanted slogans calling for the cessation of LNG expansion and the adoption of sustainable, community-focused energy alternatives. Their collective message was clear: the environmental

Other key figures in the protest, including PFF Secretary General Saeed Baloch, Majeed Motani, Ayoub Shan, and Talib Katchhi, also participated in the rally. They expressed concerns about the significant negative impacts of LNG infrastructure on traditional fishing routes, which has led to a sharp decline in fish catch.

METRO MATTERS

MQM-P slams Sindh govt over Karachi water crisis

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: The central committee of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) has raised alarm over the escalating water shortage in Karachi, blaming the PPP-led Sindh government's mismanagement for the ongoing crisis that continues to affect millions of residents in the city.

In a strongly worded statement, the MQM-P leadership criticized the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KW&SC), describing its performance as "appalling" and highlighting the suffering caused by its inability to provide a consistent and reliable water supply to the city of over 30 million people.

The MQM-P committee condemned the widespread maintenance failures within the water supply system, which have frequently left entire neighborhoods without access to clean drinking water for extended periods. These disruptions have not only inconvenienced residents but have also contributed to a growing sense of frustration and mental anguish, as Karachiites grapple with the harsh reality of water scarcity.

The statement further pointed to the systemic inefficiencies and corruption plaguing the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation, accusing it of having become an institution rife with mismanagement from top to bottom. MQM-P leaders called for urgent repairs to the city's crumbling water infrastructure and the immediate resumption of the water supply to alleviate the growing crisis.

The MQM-P also argued that Karachi, as the nation's financial backbone, deserves better management of its resources. "The city of Karachi pays the highest taxes in Pakistan, and it is high time that it receives the services of competent and qualified professionals to manage its water supply," the statement said. It concluded by urging the Sindh government to urgently recruit skilled professionals who can effectively address the chronic water shortage and restore public trust in the city's water management systems.

MQM-P aims to strengthen organizational structure

By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: In a meeting chaired by MQM-Pakistan Chairman Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, the Central Organizing Committee (COC) discussed strategies to reinforce and activate the party's organizational structure. The meeting, held at the Bahadurabad Centre, was attended by senior leaders, including Dr. Farooq Sattar, Syed Aminul Haq, and other key figures.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui emphasized the importance of revitalizing MQM-P's presence in urban Sindh politics, urging town and union council (UC) leaders to re-establish direct engagement with the public at the grassroots level. "It's crucial to re-energize the masses for the cause of our struggle," he said, acknowledging the challenges the party faced since the events of August 22, when MQM-P's political standing was perceived to have declined.

MQM-P chief reaffirmed that MQM's fight for the rights of the people is inseparable from the party's survival, stressing that every worker has a vital role to play in this mission. Dr. Siddiqui also reflected on the party's resilience, citing the successful inclusion of 7 million citizens from Karachi in the national census as an example of MQM's political strength. He underlined the importance of maintaining organizational discipline and preparing strategically for the upcoming local body elections, especially the Cantonment Board elections.

Senior leader Dr. Farooq Sattar highlighted the importance of adapting to modern technological trends to effectively communicate with the public. He pointed to the growing role of social media and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in spreading political messages and urged party workers to be fully activated on digital platforms, ensuring the party's message reaches all corners of the community.

Water line fixed at Karachi University, supply to resume

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: After days of disruption, Karachi is set to breathe a sigh of relief as repair work on the massive 84-inch water line that burst near Karachi University has been successfully completed. The ruptured pipeline, which had impacted the flow of water to large parts of the city, sparked concern over water shortages at a time when summer temperatures are already testing civic resilience.

A spokesperson for the Water Corporation confirmed on Sunday evening that repair operations had concluded and that water supply would resume as normal from Monday. The pipeline, part of the city's critical bulk water infrastructure, had fractured earlier in the week, halting supply through one of the key arteries responsible for transporting water from the main reservoirs to the urban distribution network.

According to the spokesperson, once the bulk lines are fully recharged, water will gradually be released into the distribution system, allowing a phased restoration of supply to households and businesses across Karachi. The process is expected to stabilise by Monday, barring any unforeseen technical hiccups.

The timely completion of the repair work has come as a relief to both city officials and residents, many of whom had turned to water tankers and alternative sources to meet daily needs. With temperatures on the rise and demand for water peaking, concerns had mounted over prolonged shortages and pressure on an already strained system.

While the Water Corporation has assured citizens that normalcy will return, the episode has once again underscored Karachi's fragile water infrastructure and the urgent need for long-term investment in maintenance and resilience. For now, however, the city can look forward to running taps once more, even as broader questions about sustainability and reliability of water supply remain unresolved.

Mayor opens playground as part of city revival push

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab inaugurated the Hanif Mohammad Cricket Ground at Hill Park, highlighting his administration's focus on reclaiming and revitalizing public spaces across the city. The event underscored the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation's efforts to offer residents accessible and high-quality recreational areas. Mayor Wahab assured that parks, playgrounds, and public heritage sites would be preserved and reopened for public use, reinforcing civic pride and cultural identity.

He noted that historic venues like Frere Hall and Khaliq Dina Hall had already been returned to public use, with Denso Hall and Empress Market next in line. A cultural activity zone is planned at Empress Market, and Wahab encouraged writers, artists, and performers to animate these revived spaces with community programming. The Mayor announced that 50 parks across Karachi would be rehabilitated in 2025, with two — in District West and District South — to be inaugurated this week.

The new Hanif Mohammad Cricket Ground, transformed from a derelict lake site, is named after Pakistan's iconic batsman and features cricket and football facilities, as well as walking tracks tailored for women and the elderly. The project reflects the Pakistan People's Party's broader vision of public-centered urban development. Wahab suggested reserving major parks for families on weekends and asked the media to invite public feedback on the idea.

Residents block roads in Karachi over K-Electric outages

By our correspondent

KARACHI: A strong protest erupted in Umar Colony, Ibrahim Hyderi, over the unannounced and prolonged load-shedding by K-Electric, which has left residents struggling to cope with daily power outages. The protest, which saw residents blocking the main road and setting tires on fire, severely disrupted traffic flow in the area and highlighted the community's growing frustration.

Led by youth from informal settlements, including Majid Kachi, Aslam Kachi, Chair Qasim Kachchi, and others, the demonstrators voiced their anger over daily power outages lasting anywhere from 8 to 12 hours. These power cuts have caused significant inconvenience, particularly during the ongoing Ramadan and in the sweltering summer heat. The prolonged blackouts have led to an acute water shortage and exacerbated other essential services in the community.

Protesters have heavily criticized K-Electric for its lack of responsibility and poor management, stressing that the power cuts during such critical times are unacceptable. They called on both the government and relevant authorities to intervene swiftly, demanding an end to the load-shedding and a commitment to ensuring the provision of basic utilities for all.

The residents warned that if their grievances were not addressed promptly, the protest would only grow, with plans to escalate the movement further. Their determination signals a clear demand for accountability and improvement in the quality of life in their community.

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Modi’s reckless gamble

In the restless foothills of South Asia, the quiet serenity of Pahalgam was shattered—first by violence, then by politics. In the aftermath of the tragic Pahalgam incident, where lives were lost and tensions inflamed, the Indian government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has chosen not the path of mourning or reconciliation, but rather the well-worn avenue of political theatre. What should have been a moment of reflection has been recast as a propaganda piece, stitched together by a leadership that appears ever more willing to leverage tragedy for electoral ambition. The narrative around the incident has evolved—not towards truth, but toward calculated distraction. Instead of a transparent investigation or a measured diplomatic response, India has engaged in what now appears to be a choreographed escalation.

The Modi administration's relentless efforts to blame Pakistan—despite failing to present a shred of credible evidence—speak more to the inner workings of a government chasing votes than to one genuinely concerned about regional security. This is not just political posturing; it is a deliberate playbook. With state elections looming, and Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under increasing pressure to maintain its grip on power, the tragedy has been weaponized to evoke a familiar chord among the electorate: nationalist fervor. When bread-and-butter issues like inflation, unemployment, and agrarian distress fail to inspire confidence, the specter of Pakistan serves as a reliable diversion. It is a tired but effective tactic—stirring fear, invoking patriotism, and silencing dissent.

Cross-border skirmishes, now into their second week, have turned this manufactured crisis into a powder keg. There is nothing spontaneous about the tension—no incident that could not be resolved through diplomacy. Instead, what we are witnessing is the deliberate provocation of a neighbor, a region, and a fragile peace. India's loud drumbeats of aggression are not signs of strength; they are symptoms of insecurity masked by bravado. In an even more cynical twist, Delhi has now urged the International Monetary Fund to reassess its support for Pakistan's economic recovery. This is not policy—it is pettiness dressed as diplomacy. It is a move designed not to protect India's interests, but to wound a struggling Pakistan just as it seeks to rebuild. At a time when Pakistan is navigating its own complex challenges—economic pressures, climate vulnerability, and instability on its western frontier—India's actions suggest not regional leadership, but regional sabotage.

Pakistan, for its part, has responded with measured vigilance. The civilian and military leadership has not been baited into the hysteria. Instead, they have reaffirmed their commitment to sovereignty, calling attention to the reckless nature of India's provocations. The special corps commanders conference, chaired by Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir, delivered a stern but sober message: Pakistan will defend itself if forced to—but it prefers peace. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has taken the diplomatic route, warning key allied nations that India's unchecked belligerence could have catastrophic consequences not just for Pakistan, but for the region and the world. These warnings are not overblown. The region's nuclear reality makes every inflammatory statement, every border incursion, a gamble with lives far beyond the immediate theatre.

India's hint at suspending the Indus Waters Treaty—an act tantamount to water warfare—should alarm the international community. Water is not a bargaining chip. It is a lifeline. Threatening to withhold it is not just hostile; it is inhumane. And yet, international responses have been timid. The United States, whose influence in the region remains significant, has straddled both sides with a curious lack of clarity. In a statement that seemed to appease both camps but satisfy neither, the US Vice President labelled Pakistan "responsible" while gently nudging India to exercise restraint. But nudges are not enough. At a time of such dangerous brinkmanship, diplomacy must be firm. Appeasement only emboldens the aggressor. If Washington seeks stability, it must be unambiguous in condemning adventurism—and equally clear in demanding justice before gestures of exoneration.

Contrast this with China's unambiguous position. A nation often described as Pakistan's "iron brother," China has spoken not in hushed tones but in bold declarations. Victor Gao, one of China's most recognised foreign policy voices, minced no words in a CNN interview when he warned India not to misread Beijing's commitment to Islamabad. His message was more than symbolic—it was strategic. At a time when India is pushing boundaries, China's voice offers a stark reminder that Pakistan is not isolated, and that miscalculations can have far-reaching consequences. So what now? Modi's government stands at a juncture where it must decide whether to act as a steward of peace or a provocateur of chaos. The choice is not between war and weakness, but between mature diplomacy and reckless showmanship. Pakistan has extended the hand of de-escalation more than once.

It is India that has chosen to slap it away with each passing threat, each accusation lacking proof, each military movement that risks turning tension into catastrophe. This moment, if handled with care, could become an inflection point. It could become the start of a genuine conversation on peace, water cooperation, border protocols, and economic interdependence.

But if it is squandered—if nationalist theatre once again trumps statesmanship—then the consequences will be profound and lasting. And for what? A few seats in a state assembly? A spike in poll ratings? A chance to paint an adversary as the eternal villain? The people of the subcontinent deserve more. They deserve leadership that values life over legacy, dialogue over drama. They deserve a future where peace is not held hostage to political survival. If India fails to see this, if it continues down this path of weaponized nationalism and diplomatic vandalism, then history will remember not just the tragedy of Pahalgam, but the tragic choices made in its name.

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

By Uzma Ehtasham



In a country where inflation gnaws at the dinner table, gas shortages stretch into days, and hospitals crumble beneath the weight of neglect, one might expect gloom to prevail. And yet, Pakistan remains a place of unrelenting cheer. Weddings turn into week-long affairs, complete with fireworks, food, and music. Festivals are celebrated with such grandeur that it's easy to forget the economic quicksand beneath them. There's a curious defiance here — as though joy itself has become a form of resistance. This buoyant spirit, while admirable, also betrays a deeper cultural flaw: a near-sighted tendency to escape, rather than confront, crisis. No people in the world have turned resilience into such an art form as Pakistanis. Faced with power outages, they joke about becoming candle connoisseurs. Petrol prices skyrocket, and memes follow in minutes. This is not new.

Humor, here, is a balm. It is a survival mechanism refined over generations of political chaos, military interventions, and natural disasters. But there comes a time — and it comes rarely — when the nation must put the jokes aside, however briefly, and recognize that some moments demand gravity. That moment, undeniably, is now. The recent Pahalgam incident and its sinister aftermath have once again pushed India and Pakistan toward the precipice of armed conflict. The air is thick with threats, the borders are tense, and the world watches with a familiar knot in its stomach. This is not the first time such tensions have risen, but the stakes are higher than ever. Both nations possess nuclear capabilities. Both have histories littered with miscalculations. And both are led, at present, by leaders with more political incentive to posture than to pacify.

In this precarious hour, Pakistan's online landscape offers a disturbing reflection. Instead of serious dialogue, we see TikTok's mocking India's rhetoric, comedians in military fatigues rehearsing punchlines, and meme pages running wild with warmongering satire. What began as comic relief has mutated into something grotesque. War is not a punchline. It is not a trending soundbite or a script to be acted out for likes and shares. It is a monstrous reality that, once unleashed, consumes all. This isn't to say that humor should be exiled entirely. But humor, like any tool, must be wielded with discernment. When the nation's collective consciousness prioritizes virility over vigilance, there is reason to worry. And while India's media is itself guilty of amplifying venom and distortion, that does not absolve us from rising above the muck.

It should, in fact, compel us to be better — more restrained, more responsible, more reflective. The heart of the issue lies not in comedy itself, but in the hollowing out of our digital discourse. Pakistan's online creators

When jokes go too far

— once brimming with wit and social commentary — now too often chase algorithms instead of accountability. Platforms like TikTok, which in countries like Malaysia and Indonesia have become vehicles for education and civic awareness, in Pakistan are overwhelmed with content that belittles, baits, and sensationalizes. A generation that could be inspired toward learning, reform, and empathy is being offered spectacle instead. Contrast this with TikTok initiatives abroad. In the UK, Cambridge University dons now lecture in one-minute clips, bringing centuries-old knowledge into the palms of Gen Z. In Malaysia, educational influencers dominate the platform, providing revision tips, language lessons, and science tutorials.

There, social media uplifts. Here, it trivializes. The disparity is both telling and tragic. Why, one must ask, do our intellectuals and educators shy away from these platforms? The answer is partly fear. Pakistan's internet is a jungle of abuse. Any voice that challenges the mainstream narrative, or calls for sobriety in a moment of hysteria, is met with trolling, threats, and often, doxing. In such an environment, silence can feel safer than sanity.

But if those with knowledge and insight continue to retreat, we leave the stage to those who dance on the edge of ignorance and irresponsibility. This silence is no longer benign. It is dangerous. Because in times like these, where the threat of war is not abstract but alarmingly real, what we say —

and how we say it — matters immensely. Our words shape public mood.

Our jokes shape perception. Our silence shapes consent. Pakistan is not a country short on brilliant minds. Our universities house world-class thinkers. Our writers have won international acclaim. Our activists have shown courage that echoes far beyond our borders. But these voices must enter the digital realm with the same vigor they bring to classrooms and conferences. They must teach, argue, explain, and yes, sometimes even scold — not to censor joy, but to anchor it in context. What's at stake is not just digital decorum. It is national integrity. If we continue to laugh away the threat of nuclear war, we risk becoming complicit in our own undoing. The world is burning.

Gaza bleeds under siege. Ukraine's ruins pile higher each day. These are not far-off tragedies. They are reminders that the descent into devastation is swift and indiscriminate. Pakistan must understand that the currency of peace is responsibility. Not just from politicians or generals, but from each citizen who holds a smartphone, a keyboard, or a platform. Humor, when unmoored from empathy, becomes cruelty. And satire, when divorced from perspective, becomes poison.

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Free markets don’t light homes

By S.M. Inam



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's latest promise to introduce a "free market" for electricity paints yet another glossy portrait of Pakistan's energy future. In theory, this promise is ambitious, noble even—an attempt to drive down tariffs through market competition and create a more reliable and sustainable power supply. In practice, however, it does little to console the millions of Pakistanis who sit through hours of daily load-shedding, staring at their ceiling fans in silence, waiting for the hum of electricity to return. The prime minister chaired a high-level meeting this week to review the Integrated Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP), a long-winded name for what is essentially a blueprint for improving electricity generation and supply in the country. Officials briefed him on steps taken so far, pointing out opportunities for progress.

Among the brighter ideas floated was a shift toward local energy sources—solar, nuclear, hydropower—as a way to loosen the country's dependency on imported fuel. In principle, this move is both sensible and necessary. The economic strain of relying on volatile global fuel markets has already

damaged Pakistan's fiscal health. Local, renewable resources would be not only cheaper but also more stable and environmentally responsible. The government has also declared its intention to lower electricity tariffs. A reported reduction of nearly Rs7.50 per unit has been rolled out as evidence of reform. At the same meeting, the federal power minister's team was credited with delivering Rs4.7 trillion in savings. The prime minister did not hesitate to label the figure "historic." He also urged urgent attention to mega projects like the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, further signalling the government's commitment to long-term structural reform.

But amid all this self-congratulation, something crucial is missing—connection with the people who actually pay the bills and endure the blackouts. To the average Pakistani household, the phrase "free market" carries no comfort. It may impress IMF delegates, policy analysts, and economic advisors, but to the mother trying to cook dinner in the dark or the student unable to study for exams without light, such language feels empty. It is abstract, distant, and ultimately useless. These families are not seeking theories or frameworks. They are seeking power—uninterrupted, affordable, and fairly distributed electricity. This disconnect is not new. Successive governments have hidden behind economic jargon and institutional reviews while the public con-

tends with spiraling bills and unreliable service. What has changed in the last two decades? Load-shedding has become less predictable but no less real.

Fuel prices have soared while real wages have stagnated. Solar energy, despite its promise, remains out of reach for the poorest communities, and hydropower projects often move at a glacial pace, bogged down by bureaucracy and corruption. The optimism from Islamabad rarely trickles down to the alleyways of Karachi or the villages of Sindh and Balochistan. Yes, a free electricity market sounds good on paper. But such models depend on regulatory capacity, transparency, and real competition—three qualities that Pakistan's energy sector sorely lacks. Without a level playing field, what's to stop monopolistic behaviors from simply driving prices further up? Deregulation without oversight often translates into chaos, not efficiency. And when the state shrugs off responsibility in the name of market logic, it's the citizens who pay the price.

What the public wants is clear. Not slogans. Not figures. Not reform announcements. Just electricity. Affordable. Reliable. Daily. This is not a question of policy flair; it is a basic issue of governance. No democracy can survive if it cannot provide its citizens with the essentials of life. And in a country where millions hover just above the poverty line, the failure to light homes becomes not just an administrative shortcoming but a moral failure. The government has a chance to change course—but it must be honest with itself first. That means admitting where reforms are slow, where savings are theoretical, and where the people are still suffering. It also means abandoning the habit of making grand announcements without concrete timelines or localized solutions. Building dams and drafting long-term policies are important. But so is ensuring that people can trust their switch will turn on a light, not disappointment.

Pakistan's energy future must be built on more than market ideals. It must be rooted in the everyday needs of its people. Harnessing indigenous energy sources is not merely an economic choice—it is a social responsibility. There is no room for excuses anymore. The urgency is real, and the stakes are too high for another round of empty promises. The phrase "free market" may echo through conference halls, but it will never echo through homes that sit in the dark. Only power can do that—real, working, accessible power. And until that arrives, all the reforms in the world won't matter to the people still sweating through the silence.

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Ashes of war, seeds of peace

By Atiq Raja



Throughout human history, the specter of war has cast a long shadow over the trajectory of civilization. It has reshaped borders, dismantled cultures, and claimed millions of lives. The reasons behind these conflicts have varied: some were waged in the name of survival, others in the pursuit of justice. Yet, despite these justifications, the overwhelming legacy of war remains one of unmitigated destruction—of life, of communities, and of societies that once thrived. In the 21st century, the reality of warfare has evolved, with its costs expanding beyond the battlefield. What was once physical devastation now manifests in economic collapse, environmental destruction, and an overarching sense of global instability.

The true toll of war is not just counted in bodies but in the prolonged suffering of entire populations. The world wars, for example, left a brutal imprint on humanity—taking the lives of over 100 million people and reducing entire cities to rubble. The aftermath of these global conflicts set the stage for decades of healing, as nations struggled to rebuild what had been lost. However, the suffering didn't end with the cessation of hostilities. In the years since, we've witnessed new conflicts, including the devast-

ation in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Ukraine, where the human cost has been staggering. In these modern wars, entire infrastructures have been shattered, millions of people have been displaced, and humanitarian crises have erupted with tragic consequences.

But the effects of war are far-reaching. In an era where warfare involves not just boots on the ground but advanced cyber weapons, the damage extends far beyond military targets. The collapse of a nation's economy, the breakdown of its healthcare system, the interruption of education—these are just some of the devastating consequences that affect generations to come. The modern battlefield is as likely to be digital as it is physical, with new forms of warfare that leave entire populations vulnerable without a single shot being fired. The consequences are often invisible yet no less destructive: energy blackouts, financial collapse, the disruption of daily life in ways that are difficult to reverse.

The financial burden of war is staggering. In 2023 alone, global military spending reached a record \$2.4 trillion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). This vast sum, which serves to fuel arms races and military competition, could otherwise be directed towards building a more peaceful, prosperous world—investing in education, healthcare, clean water, and sustainable energy. It is a tragic irony that humanity spends so much on tools of destruction, when the resources could instead be used to address the fundamental issues that lead to conflict in the first place—poverty, inequality, and the looming existential threat of climate change.

Peace, however, is not a passive state of merely avoiding war. True peace is built on justice, equality, and cooperation. It is the fertile ground in which societies can grow, innovate, and develop. Countries that have prioritized peace, such as Germany and Japan, offer a stark contrast to the devastation wrought by war. Both nations, once devastated by conflict, have risen to become global economic powerhouses, in no small part due to their commitment to peace-building, education, and international collaboration. In peace, trade flourishes, creativity blossoms, and societies thrive. A peaceful world is one where children are not conscripted into militancy but are instead given the tools to build a better future. It is a world where knowledge and opportunity are shared, where the arts and sciences can flourish, and where cultures can exchange freely and without fear.

Achieving lasting peace requires global investment in several key areas. First, dialogue must be prioritized over conflict, with diplomacy and mediation taking precedence over war. Education plays a crucial role in fostering peace as well, teaching young people about tolerance, empathy, and the skills necessary to resolve disputes without violence. Economic justice is also a critical

piece of the puzzle, as inequality and resource scarcity remain key drivers of conflict. Finally, stronger global institutions, such as the United Nations, must be supported and empowered to prevent conflicts from escalating. Most importantly, people-to-people bonds must be strengthened, encouraging cultural exchanges and fostering understanding between communities.

We stand at a pivotal moment in human history. We can choose to let the cycle of war and destruction continue, repeating the same mistakes of the past. Or we can choose a different path, one that leads to peace, justice, and shared prosperity. Peace is not a distant dream, nor is it an unrealistic ideal. It is, in fact, the most practical, cost-effective, and morally sound path forward. The world does not need more weapons or more military might. What it needs is more wisdom, more dialogue, and more trust between nations. It needs fewer walls and more bridges, fewer soldiers and more citizens committed to peaceful coexistence. The future is in our hands, and the choice is clear: we can either continue to fuel the fires of conflict, or we can work together to forge a path of peace that will ensure a better, brighter future for all. Peace is not utopia—it is the only viable path to global prosperity.

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On tenterhooks

By Ghazi Salahuddin

When the spokesperson of the government of Pakistan, Information Minister Attaulah Tarar, appears on the news channels at an ungodly hour of well past midnight — early Wednesday morning — to say that the country had "credible intelligence" that India intended to launch a military strike within the next 24 to 36 hours, why wouldn't we take it seriously? That it didn't actually happen within that timeframe was certainly some relief. But there are reasons to remain on tenterhooks as tensions between India and Pakistan have shown no signs of subsiding. Besides, considerable mystification resides in what is being said by either side. And social media continues to play with fire. We cannot be sure as to what statement is meant for whom. Obviously, warmongering is a game that is governed by uncertified rules.

So, as I write these words, I feel that I am "on a darkling plain, swept by confused alarms of struggle and flight", to quote from Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach", which also talks about "ignorant armies" clashing by night. Ah, but what is happening to us is real. No poetic allusion would work for us.

Anyhow, suspense about what might happen has deepened this week. One is not able to find any clarification from all those talk shows that seem to have brought out

rustled defence and security experts from their retirement. Some believe the situation would de-escalate without any major encounter because diplomatic channels have been activated. Others insist that India has trapped itself into taking some action, if only to save its face.

We go round and round in our media and in private discussions, waiting anxiously for what will happen on the ground. The Pahalgam terror attack in India-held Kashmir had taken place on April 22, and initially it seemed that the threatened Indian response would come in a day or two. However, the preparatory drill undertaken by India took some time and it was only on Wednesday that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave his military 'operational freedom' to respond to the Pahalgam attack.

Anyhow, we continue to be on tenterhooks until at least the time of this writing. There are some indications that give you hope that sanity may still prevail in South Asia. After all, there seems to be a pattern of rising and falling levels of animosity and conflict, with intermittent periods of peace and amity. The two countries have fought three wars that have settled nothing.

There were campaigns like Aman ki

Asha, though momentarily defeated by the dark forces of hatred and intolerance. Still, peace activists in both countries have survived very difficult times and hope to restore their mission when the present potentially irrational phase of lethal confrontation is over.

That said, I am afraid that at this moment, prospects of adventurism on the part of the Indian leadership are rising. This situation has prompted our military brass to express "complete confidence in the operational readiness, deterrence posture and morale of all formations and strategic forces to defend the nation across the entire threat spectrum."

I am quoting from a press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Friday after a special session of the Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) that was presided over by the army chief at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

The conference conducted a comprehensive review of the prevailing geo-strategic environment, particularly emphasising the current Pakistan-India standoff and the broader regional security calculus.

"While reaffirming Pakistan's abiding commitment to peace, stability, and pros-

perity, the forum made clear that any attempt to impose war will be responded to, surely and decisively, and aspirations of the people of Pakistan will be respected at all costs", said the ISPR press release.

Meanwhile, against the backdrop of patriotic, morale-boosting messages on the media, we have to contend with our daily routines. Take this as a diversion, but there is a need to build consensus in society regarding any foreign threat to the nation's well-being. Where does the strength of a society come from?

Unfortunately, Pakistan is fairly deficient in social harmony, and many divisive issues remain unresolved. This may not be an appropriate occasion to discuss our collective deficits or lapses in our quality of governance.

However, I am constrained to look at the major headlines of the week and participate in the discussions that engage our social activists and concerned citizens.

One crucial event for the media is World Press Freedom Day, which was observed yesterday, May 3. Unesco's theme for the Day this year is 'Reporting in the brave new world: the impact of Artificial Intelligence on press freedom and the media'. For us in Pakistan, the issue simply is freedom, and restrictions that have recently been imposed on the media have added to our shortcomings as a nation.

Pakistan to welcome Malaysia's participation in Pahalgam probe

PM Shehbaz reiterated that Pakistan had received no credible evidence to support India's claims, labeling the accusations as "baseless" and politically motivated

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed Pakistan's grave concern over the growing tensions in South Asia, particularly following the tragic incident in Pahalgam, Indian-administered Kashmir. During a telephone conversation with Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, PM Shehbaz rejected India's unsubstantiated attempt to link Pakistan to the violence, which has further strained relations between the two countries.

PM Shehbaz reiterated that Pakistan had received no credible evidence to support India's claims, emphasizing that the accusations were "baseless" and politically motivated. "Pakistan reaffirms its offer for an international, transparent, credible, and neutral investigation," he said, also inviting Malaysia to participate in the inquiry. This statement underscores Pakistan's continued stance of openness to a fair investigation into the incident, seeking to counter India's unilateral narrative.



The Prime Minister further stressed Pakistan's longstanding commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms, highlighting the country's pivotal role in global counterterrorism efforts. He warned that India's provocative actions are diverting Pakistan's attention from its

key security challenges along its western borders, an issue that remains crucial for national stability.

PM Shehbaz called it "unthinkable" for Pakistan to have any involvement in the attack, particularly at a time when the country is working hard to recover from an economic crisis and striving towards peace and stability. His remarks come in the wake of mounting allegations from India following the tragic deaths of 27 people in Pahalgam on April 22, which India blamed on Pakistan without providing sub-

stantive evidence.

Both leaders also used the conversation to reaffirm the deep, longstanding ties between Pakistan and Malaysia, with discussions focusing on enhancing cooperation in trade, investment, and cultural exchanges. The Pakistani Prime Minister expressed his hope to visit Malaysia later this year, underscoring the importance of fostering stronger bilateral relations.

The conversation between the two leaders also highlighted the ongoing collaboration on regional and international issues, with both agreeing to continue their engagement to ensure peace and stability in the region. PM Shehbaz's dialogue with Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim underscores Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to maintain peace in South Asia amid escalating tensions with India.

Congress airs video linking Modi to Pulwama election ploy

Congress leader accused the Indian PM of emotionally manipulating voters by invoking the 2019 tragedy—widely condemned as a political stunt disguised as patriotism

News Desk

NEW DEHLI: A senior leader from India's Congress party stunned a live television audience by airing a video clip that directly implicates Prime Minister Narendra Modi in exploiting the Pulwama attack for electoral gain. The revelation has ignited fierce debate across India's political and media landscape, raising fresh concerns about the ruling party's use of national tragedies for political mileage.

The video, aired during a primetime talk show, captured Modi explicitly appealing for votes in the name of Indian soldiers killed in the Pulwama incident. The Congress leader, whose identity was not disclosed in early reports, accused the Prime Minister of emotionally manipulating the electorate by invoking the 2019 tragedy, widely condemned by critics as a political stunt masked as patriotism.

Security sources told local media that Modi's use of the Pahalgam episode—a recent flare-up that led to dozens of deaths—bears stark resemblance to the Pulwama narrative, once



again attempting to create a wave of nationalist sentiment amid election season. The Congress leader's disclosure comes at a time when tensions in Kashmir are again at a high, with India unilaterally suspending the Indus Waters Treaty and Pakistan closing its airspace in response.

Observers noted that the live television anchor, known for her BJP-leaning stance, appeared visibly shaken as the footage played. Attempts to deflect or defend Modi reportedly fell flat, leaving the anchor and other panelists momentarily speechless as the clip revealed Modi's direct appeal to voters based on the sacrifice of soldiers.

Political experts have harshly criticized the practice of leveraging national secu-

city issues and soldiers' deaths for political campaigns.

"It's a dangerous manipulation of public grief for personal political ambition," one analyst noted. Another remarked that the clip serves as a damning indictment of Modi's approach to crisis politics—using tragedy not as a call for unity but as a tool for electoral arithmetic.

As calls grow louder for an independent investigation into the politicization of such incidents, the broadcast has intensified scrutiny of India's media ecosystem, especially its role in enabling or silencing uncomfortable truths. For many, this moment has peeled back the curtain on how national tragedy can be cynically converted into political capital.

Turkish warship's arrival marks new chapter in Pak-Turkey relations

By ISPR

KARACHI: The Turkish warship TCG Büyük Ada has docked at Karachi port on a goodwill mission, marking a significant moment in the long-standing friendship between Pakistan and Turkey. The warship's arrival was met with a grand reception, including a guard of honor by the Pakistan Navy, senior military officials, Turkish diplomatic representatives, and local dignitaries.

The ceremony, which featured the national anthems of both countries and waving flags, highlighted the deep-rooted bond between the two nations. According to a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the goodwill visit aims to bolster professional cooperation between the naval forces of Pakistan and Turkey. It also serves as a reflection of both countries' commitment to promoting peace and stability in the region.

The visit will include various professional activities, exercises, and discussions focusing on defense strategy, naval security, and technical exchanges. The TCG Büyük Ada is a state-of-the-art warship, part of Turkey's "Ada class." Equipped with advanced weaponry, sonar, radar, and electronic warfare systems, the ship is highly regarded for its capabilities in maritime surveillance, counter-terrorism operations, and defense missions.

The ship's arrival underscores Turkey's technological advancements in naval defense and further solidifies the strategic ties between the two countries. ISPR emphasized that this visit symbolizes not only the military cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey but also the enduring cultural and diplomatic relationship.

The Pakistani Navy's close ties with the Turkish Navy, founded on mutual respect and shared ideals, are poised to deepen further. This goodwill visit paves the way for future joint exercises, training programs, and defense cooperation, marking a new chapter in the partnership between the two nations.



tions, all of which captivated the dignitaries. It not only highlighted the richness of Bangladesh's culture, traditions, and heritage but also emphasized the importance of building stronger cultural ties between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

To mark the occasion, the Bangladesh Mission in Karachi organized a colorful evening featuring cultural programs that celebrated the nation's art, traditions, festivities, and cuisine. Diplomats, including the Consul General of Turkey, Japan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam, the British Deputy Head of Mission, parliamentarians, Honorary Consuls of various countries, government

officials, UN representatives, journalists, business leaders, academics, columnists, cultural activists, as well as children and women, all took part in the vibrant and festive event.

The Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Karachi continues its efforts to promote cooperation in fields such as culture, trade, commerce, investment, education, scientific research, and healthcare. The mission reaffirmed its sincere support for strengthening mutually beneficial relationships, including the expansion of cultural exchanges and trade ties between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

PSL PAKISTAN SUPER LEAGUE



Karachi Kings defeat Lahore Qalandars by 4 wickets

By our correspondent

LAHORE: Karachi Kings clinched a dramatic 4-wicket victory over arch-rivals Lahore Qalandars in the 24th match of Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 10, held at Lahore's Qaddafi Stadium. A rain-interrupted contest, reduced to 15 overs per side, turned into a high-scoring spectacle where Karachi successfully chased down a revised DLS target of 168 with three balls to spare.

Winning the toss, Karachi opted to field first. Lahore Qalandars began strongly, with Fakhar Zaman and Mohammad Naeem stitching together a fiery 90-run stand in just 7.5 overs. Fakhar smashed 51 off 33 balls, including four boundaries and three towering sixes, while Naeem added a brisk 39. However, after their dismissals and a rain delay, the batting line-



up faltered. Only Abdullah Shafiq (18) managed to reach double figures as Lahore posted 160/8. Abbas Afridi was the standout bowler for Karachi, bagging 4 wickets and taking his tournament tally to 15. Mir Hamza, Aamer Jamal, and Hassan Ali each chipped in with a wicket.

The rain revised Karachi Kings' target to 168 in 15 overs. The chase wobbled at times, but Irfan Khan emerged as the hero with a

blistering 48 not out off just 21 deliveries, guiding his side home in the penultimate over. He received valuable support from Saad Baig (25), while David Warner and Tim Seifert contributed 24 runs apiece. Mohammad Nabi and Wess also added important cameos. Lahore's Haris Rauf and Daryl Mitchell each took 2 wickets, but could not stop Karachi's momentum.

Shaheen Shah Afridi

captained Lahore Qalandars, while David Warner led Karachi Kings. In team changes, Lahore brought in spinner Rashid Hussain for Tom Curran, while Karachi replaced Fawad Ali and Umair Bin Yousuf with Hassan Ali and Saad Baig.

The win keeps the play-off hopes alive for Karachi Kings, who now stand fourth on the points table with 8 points. Lahore Qalandars remain in third with 9 points. Quetta Gladiators lead with 11, followed by Islamabad United with 10. Peshawar Zalmi are in fifth with 6 points, while Multan Sultans sit at the bottom with just one win from eight games and have been eliminated from the tournament. The high-octane clash not only reignited Karachi's campaign but also underscored the PSL's enduring reputation for thrillers that keep fans on the edge of their seats.

PCB's anti-corruption unit takes full charge in PSL

By our correspondent

LAHORE: For the first time in its history, the Pakistan Super League (PSL) is running without appointed integrity officers alongside teams—a role previously seen as crucial to shielding players from suspicious approaches. Instead, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has handed full responsibility to its own anti-corruption department for monitoring all teams during PSL 10.

In previous seasons, integrity officers were assigned to each franchise, while their presence may not be visible, they remain actively engaged in surveillance and enforcement. All players and team officials have been given clear guidance to avoid contact with any unauthorized individuals. These instructions have been delivered through lectures, written materials, and training videos to help them spot and report any potentially corrupt approaches.

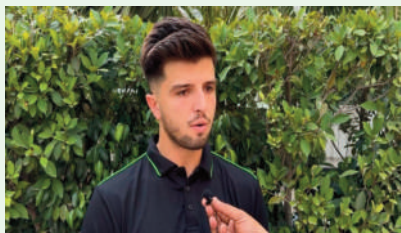
“One day, I will surely play for Pakistan,” says Naeem

By our correspondent

LAHORE: Mohammad Naeem, the young top-order batsman of Lahore Qalandars, has voiced his dream of donning the Pakistan national team jersey, calling it a matter of destiny and hard work. In a candid interview with Geo News, the 24-year-old reflected on his journey, challenges, and the unwavering support that has shaped his cricketing rise, especially from within the Lahore Qalandars setup. Despite a string of underwhelming performances earlier in the Pakistan Super League (PSL), Naeem managed to stage a solid comeback, scoring a critical half-century that revitalized both his confidence and reputation. He credits Lahore Qalandars' consistent belief in his potential as the key to his return to form. "It's not just about this PSL," Naeem said. "The franchise has stood by me for six to seven years, right from the Player Development Program, through the Battle of the Qalandars, and even during the Namibia tour. Their faith has never wavered."

Naeem hails from Parachinar, a region known more for its natural beauty than cricketing infrastructure. He had to move to Lahore to pursue his dream. "We didn't have any facilities to play cricket in Parachinar. I came to Lahore, attended the Qalandars' trials, and that's how my journey began," he said, recounting the early struggles that marked his path to professional cricket.

Determined to evolve as a multi-format player, Naeem rejected the idea of being boxed into one format. "Being labelled a one-format player is just a mindset. Every



cricketer dreams of representing Pakistan in Test cricket. That's my goal too," he declared.

Naeem also touched upon the influence of senior players like Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf, and Fakhar Zaman. Training and sharing dressing rooms with them, he says, has been a formative experience. "I've learned a lot from them. Their trust and guidance have helped me grow. While I consider Babar Azam the best batsman in Pakistan, batting alongside Abdullah Shafique was a special moment—his class and composure were inspiring." Naeem even sounded confident when it came to dealing with express pace. "After facing Shaheen and Haris in the nets, no other bowler feels as tough. They're world-class. Facing others feels like club-level practice," he said with a smile.

As the PSL progresses, Naeem's ambition is clear. He wants to translate his domestic platform into international success. With resilience in his approach and the strong backing of his team, Mohammad Naeem is a name Pakistan cricket fans might soon hear more frequently—not just in franchise leagues, but on the global stage.

Hasan Ali eyes full comeback to Pakistan team

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Karachi Kings' fast bowler Hasan Ali has shared his goal of making a permanent return to Pakistan's national cricket team, following a period of rehabilitation. The 29-year-old pacer explained, "After my rehab, my focus was on performing so that the selectors would notice me. Before the PSL, I took the most wickets in the National T20 Cup. My target is to make a proper comeback to the Pakistan team and play consistently because every time I've come back, it's only been for one match or one series."



Reflecting on his long recovery process, Hasan Ali credited his success to months of hard work. "I spent six to seven months working hard on my fitness and skills at the National Cricket Academy, and I made sure to focus on improving myself during this time." He further added, "Pakistan is not a club team. This is the national team, and only those who perform will remain in it. If you perform, you will stay; if not, you'll have to make way for someone else."

Hasan also spoke about the rivalry between Karachi Kings and Lahore Qalandars, two of the biggest franchises in the Pakistan Super League (PSL). "It's great that Lahore Qalandars and Karachi Kings are such big rivals. When two major teams from large cities compete, it really enhances the competition. Fans get more excited and attend the matches, and that's good for the league. Everyone wants to play well, and the best team wins."

Looking at his time in Karachi, Hasan acknowledged the special honor of being given the vice-captaincy role, saying, "I've been given a lot of respect in Karachi Kings, and I'm thankful for that. This year, I've been given the responsibility of vice-captain, and I'm determined to help Karachi Kings lift the trophy."

3 die, 20 missing as two boats capsize in China

News Desk

BEIJING: At least three people have died and 20 remain missing after two boats capsized in south-west China amid heavy rain, hail, and strong winds, according to Chi-

nese state media.

The incident occurred on Sunday in the Wulong district near the Wu River—a major tributary of the Yangtze—close to the city of Jiangxi. The boats were carrying around 70 passengers when they

were caught in sudden rough weather that overturned them and plunged the passengers into the river.

Rescue teams managed to save 50 people, officials said, but search operations are continuing for the

missing 20. The boats were reportedly navigating routine travel routes when the weather took a swift and dangerous turn.

Local authorities have yet to confirm whether any of the missing are children or elderly.