

US Cardinal chosen as new Catholic Pope, named ‘Leo XIV’

Amidst secrecy, 133 Roman Catholic cardinals convened in the Sistine Chapel, upholding the sacred tradition of electing the Holy Father

News Desk

VATICAN: The Vatican has officially selected its new spiritual leader. Robert Francis Prevost, an American cardinal, has been chosen as the 266th Pope, becoming the first American to assume the papacy. He will be known as Pope Leo XIV, taking on the mantle of leadership for the global Catholic community at a time of significant change and challenges within the Church.

The election, which unfolded after at least four rounds of voting, was conducted in the heart of Vatican City. A total of 133 Roman Catholic cardinals gathered in secrecy, casting their votes in the Sistine Chapel, as the sacred tradition of selecting the Holy Father continued. The process was marked by quiet anticipation, with cardinals from around the world deliberat-



ing on the qualities needed in the next pope to lead the faithful.

When the decision was made, the iconic signal of white smoke rising from the Sistine Chapel chimney confirmed the outcome to the world. The traditional symbol was met with a deep sense of anticipation, marking the end of a period of uncertainty and the beginning of a new era for the Church. Following the announcement, bell chimes rang out across St. Peter's Basilica, sig-

nalling the arrival of the new Pope and bringing forth a sense of celebration and solemnity among the faithful gathered in Vatican City.

Pope Leo XIV's election marks not only a personal achievement for Prevost but also a moment of historical significance for the Church. As the first American Pope, his selection is seen as a reflection of the growing influence of the United States in global Catholicism, a shift that may reshape the Church's future

direction. The announcement of the new Pope comes at a time when the Vatican faces numerous challenges, including issues of governance, transparency, and the ongoing efforts to address the Church's role in a rapidly changing world. As Pope Leo XIV prepares to step into the role, his leadership will be closely watched, with the eyes of millions of Catholics worldwide eager to see how he will guide the Church in the years to come. Donald Trump, who hailed the appointment, calling the arrival of the first US pope "a great honor for our country," seldom saw eye-to-eye with Francis. "A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not of building bridges, is not Christian," Francis said in February 2016. "This is not the gospel."

Pakistan shot down two Indian jets using Chinese aircraft

News Desk

WASHINGTON: Two senior US officials have confirmed that Pakistan used Chinese-made J-10 fighter jets to shoot down two Indian military aircraft — including a Rafale — in a development that not only raises the stakes in the current India-Pakistan standoff but also signals a dramatic shift in the regional balance of air power.

According to a British news agency report, no US-manufactured F-16s were involved in the operation, a detail that experts interpret as both politically calculated and technologically reveal-



ing. The J-10s, designed and produced by China, were equipped with advanced air-to-air missiles and reportedly executed the strike with precision, downing at least one Rafale jet, a cornerstone of India's multi-billion-euro defence deal with France.

The incident, which occurred on Wednesday and remains officially unacknowledged by Indian authorities, is now being cited as a major milestone for Chinese aerospace capabilities. Speaking on condition of anonymity, one of the American officials described the skirmish as a "live demonstration" of Chinese weapons against top-tier Western platforms — a moment that could redefine how military strategists assess air dominance in Asia.

"This isn't just a tactical engagement," said a former US defence official. "It's a symbolic confrontation between Western and Chinese defence systems, and Beijing just got a powerful boost in credibility."

The second US official confirmed the use of Chinese J-10s and the downing of the Rafale, India's pride since its 2016 purchase of 36 of the aircraft from France in a deal valued at €8 billion. That one of these jets was neutralized by a Chinese counterpart will likely raise alarm in New Delhi and among India's Western defence partners.

Flight operations resumed at Karachi Airport

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: Flight operations at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport have resumed without delay, bringing relief to passengers and airlines after a temporary suspension that had disrupted travel schedules. Authorities confirmed on Thursday that the closure had been lifted and air traffic was once again moving normally through one of Pakistan's busiest aviation hubs.

In a further development, previously restricted air routes in Lahore's airspace have also been reopened, signalling a broader restoration of normal flight activity across the country.

US urges direct India-Pakistan talks with mediation offer

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio expressed deep concern over the ongoing conflict, lamenting the loss of Pakistani civilian lives in Indian attacks

News Desk

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan and Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar to immediately reduce tensions, emphasizing direct India-Pakistan talks despite US President Donald Trump's previous offer to mediate between the two countries.

In a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Rubio conveyed deep concern over the ongoing conflict, while expressing regret over the deaths of Pakistani civilians in Indian attacks. Prime Minister Shehbaz reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to defend the nation at all costs, noting that the Pakistani people are deeply angered by India's unprovoked military actions.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan announced its full support for Pakistan, with the Azeri Ambassador condemning Indian military actions in a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz and recommending the resolution of the conflict through diplomatic means.

On the diplomatic front, Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs,



Adel Al-Jubeir, is scheduled to visit Pakistan today (Friday). This follows a meeting between Jubeir and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in New Delhi, where Indian Foreign Minister Jaishankar stoked further tensions by calling for more military actions against Pakistan.

In a separate briefing, US Department of State spokesperson, Tami Bruce, shared that during a conversation with Jaishankar, Rubio reiterated the US commitment to counterterrorism cooperation with India. When speaking with Prime Minister Shehbaz, Rubio expressed sorrow over the loss of civilian lives in the ongoing conflict and urged Pakistan to take steps to end its support for terrorist groups.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also reiterated Pakistan's right to act in self-de-

fense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. He acknowledged President Trump's concerns regarding the current security situation in South Asia. Rubio assured that the United States is closely monitoring developments in the region and remains committed to promoting peace and stability in South Asia.

On Thursday, US Vice President JD Vance stated that Washington seeks to see a reduction in tension between India and Pakistan but stressed that it is not fundamentally America's issue. In an interview with Fox News, Vance, a long-time advocate for non-intervention in international conflicts, stated, "What we can do is try to encourage them to reduce tensions, but we are not going to be involved in a war that is not fundamentally our issue, and we have no capacity to control."

Saudi-Israel ties no longer prerequisite in US nuclear talks

News Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States has dropped its previous requirement that Saudi Arabia normalize relations with Israel in exchange for a civil nuclear agreement, a major shift in policy ahead of President Donald Trump's visit to Riyadh on May 13. The move is being widely interpreted as a significant diplomatic concession to the kingdom and a blow to Israeli ambitions for broader regional acceptance.

Under former President Joe Biden, US policy had tied any nuclear deal with Saudi Arabia to the normalization of ties with Israel, following the precedent of the Abraham Accords. However, ongoing Israeli military operations in Gaza — which have led to widespread civilian casualties — have further hardened Arab public opinion against Israel. Consequently, Riyadh has shown no willingness to formalize ties with Tel Aviv under current circumstances.

The US retreat from its earlier stance reflects the urgency of progressing nuclear negotiations with Saudi Arabia, which has long expressed a desire for civil nuclear capability — particularly the right to enrich uranium domestically. Washington's new approach comes as both sides prepare for discussions not only on nuclear cooperation but also on a sweeping \$100 billion defence and economic deal, which is expected to dominate Trump's visit.

Indian flag post in Haji Pir Sector destroyed

By ISPR

ISLAMABAD: In a significant military response, Pakistan's armed forces have successfully targeted and destroyed an Indian army post in the Haji Pir sector of Kashmir. The destruction of the "Jhanda Ziarat" post has caused considerable damage to the enemy, marking another successful strike by Pakistan's forces, which have already destroyed several Indian check posts in the region. In addition to this, Pakistan's air defense system downed another Indian "Herop" drone in the Bahawalnagar area, further escalating tensions in the volatile region.

Earlier, Pakistani forces carried out a precise counter-attack in the Pandu sector, where they destroyed an Indian army headquarters. This operation was triggered in response to unprovoked firing by Indian troops. Security sources confirmed that the strike on the Indian headquarters was a direct retaliation to the hostile actions.

Indian Air Force exposed after Pakistan operation: French daily Le Monde

Le Monde's investigation called India's Rafale-powered air response "disappointing," revealing how cutting-edge weaponry crumbled under real combat pressure

News Desk

PARIS: A French newspaper report has delivered a sharp blow to India's military prestige, questioning the capability of the Indian Air Force (IAF) after a recent military operation against Pakistan that allegedly revealed major weaknesses in India's much-touted Rafale fighter fleet.

Published by Le Monde, the investigation described the IAF's performance during the conflict as "disappointing," noting that despite India's acquisition of cutting-edge military hardware, the Rafale jets failed to live up to expectations in combat. Defence analysts quoted in the report revealed that India was forced to admit the loss of three fighter jets, although the aircraft were not officially named. However, online footage of aircraft wreckage, confirmed by French sources, suggests that one of the downed planes was indeed a Rafale — a severe blow to India's defence image.

India had signed a €8 billion deal in 2016 to purchase 36 Rafale jets from France, marketing them as a leap forward in air superiority. Yet concerns over tech-



nical faults and inadequate training have persisted. A December 2024 report by India's Auditor General had already flagged issues related to pilot preparedness and systemic flaws within the air force.

Le Monde further revealed that Indian authorities attempted to suppress domestic media coverage of the fighter jet losses, pressuring outlets to delete or revise related reports — a move that has intensified questions about transparency under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

The French paper offered a stark contrast by praising the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) for its effectiveness, professionalism, and combat experience. It noted that Pakistani pilots have spent over 15 years con-

ducting counterterrorism operations in the country's tribal belt, giving them an operational edge. The report also highlighted Pakistan's strategic decision to acquire Chinese J-10C jets specifically to counter the Rafales, stating that the PAF's blend of Chinese and French aircraft gives it a balanced and adaptive fleet.

Military analysts say the destruction of Indian jets — and the fact that it was confirmed by a prominent international publication — has exposed significant operational flaws in India's defence posture. The episode not only undermines the credibility of the Modi government's military buildup but also opens India up to international scrutiny regarding its high-stakes procurement strategies and battlefield readiness.

Maritime security at ports on high alert

By our correspondent

KARACHI: In response to escalating tensions between Pakistan and India, the country's maritime security has been heightened, with a high alert issued at all major ports. This includes the restriction of small boats from entering the sea, while fishing vessels have also been recalled from Pakistani waters.

Sources confirm that additional security measures have been implemented at Pakistan's three primary ports: Gwadar Port, Port Qasim, and Karachi Port. Authorities have enforced a ban on unnecessary movement in these areas. Fishermen have been advised to exercise caution, and small fishing boats have been prohibited from venturing into the sea.

In a broader measure, Pakistan has imposed a fishing ban in its maritime



zones, ordering fishing trawlers and boats to return to port. The restrictions will remain in place until the high alert status is lifted, ensuring no non-essential boats or fishing vessels are on the water.

Meanwhile, in educational matters, the Islamabad District Administration has announced that all schools, colleges, universities, and training institutions in the capital will be closed on May 9 and 10 due to the prevailing security situation. How-

ever, ongoing local and international examinations will proceed as scheduled.

In Punjab, the education department has also confirmed that schools, colleges, and universities in major cities including Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, and Gujranwala will remain closed on May 9 and 10. Examinations scheduled for these dates have been postponed, except for international-level exams, which will continue as planned.

PM affirms full implementation of NSC recommendations

The meeting exuded determination, underscoring Pakistan's unwavering resolve to safeguard its sovereignty and protect its citizens

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif convened a significant meeting at the PM House on Thursday, drawing together key members of his cabinet alongside top security officials. The meeting, marked by a serious tone, focused on reaffirming Pakistan's resolve to implement the decisions made by the National Security Committee (NSC) in light of India's recent cross-border military strikes.

Notably, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, a central figure in the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), was also present, underscoring his ongoing involvement in the nation's critical security discussions.

According to official sources, the meeting assessed the security situation across the country, particularly after India's overnight airstrikes on civilian areas in Azad Kashmir and parts of Punjab.

The meeting came as a stern response to these aggressive actions, with attendees voicing unwavering support for Pakistan's



armed forces. A consensus emerged that the nation stands united, bolstered by "courage and unity" in the face of this challenge. The meeting's tone was one of determination, emphasizing that Pakistan's security apparatus would be resolute in protecting the nation's sovereignty and the lives of its citizens.

The session was held in the wake of a previous National Security Committee meeting, which had granted Pakistan's armed forces full authority to respond to Indian provocations. The communiqué issued by the NSC invoked Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, underscoring Pakistan's inherent right to self-defence.

The statement was firm, declaring that Pakistan reserves the right to retaliate "at a time, place, and manner of its choosing," a message that echoed the coun-

try's resolve to defend its sovereignty and retaliate for the lives lost in the recent strikes. Further, the communiqué also called for the international community to hold India accountable for its repeated breaches of international law and the United Nations Charter.

It reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to peace but emphasized that the country would never compromise on its territorial integrity, sovereignty, or the safety of its citizens. Pakistan's stance on the allegations of terrorist camps operating within its borders remained firm, rejecting them as politically motivated and unfounded. This meeting not only solidified Pakistan's stance on its security but also sent a clear message to the global community that Islamabad would not tolerate any further violations of its sovereignty.

India attempts drone strikes on 24 locations, says Ishaq Dar

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has made startling revelations about a series of attempted drone strikes by India, claiming that unmanned aerial vehicles targeted 24 separate locations across Pakistan—from the capital, Islamabad, to the port city of Karachi. In a press briefing marked by urgency and defiance, Dar confirmed that the drones had entered Pakistani airspace and were swiftly neutralised by the country's air defence systems.



According to the foreign minister, the Pakistan Army acted decisively, shooting down the intruding drones before they could cause damage or casualties. The

operation, which spanned hundreds of miles of Pakistani territory, was described as a clear and calculated act of Indian aggression. Dar stressed

that while Pakistan remained committed to regional stability, it unequivocally reserves the right to respond at a time and place of its choosing. The message from Islamabad was firm—any further provocation would not go unanswered.

Dar also assured the public that Pakistan's armed forces were fully alert. The Army, Navy, and Air Force have been placed on high operational readiness, ready to defend the country's sovereignty in the face of any hostile actions.

Pakistan forecasts 6pc GDP growth in push for recovery

Finance Minister Aurangzeb highlighted a 3.6 trillion rupee budget surplus in early fiscal 2025, signalling progress in Pakistan’s fiscal consolidation drive

News Desk

LONDON: Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb has expressed renewed optimism over Pakistan’s economic trajectory, asserting that the country is gradually moving toward stability with a clear target of reaching 6 percent GDP growth. Speaking at the Pakistan Access Day conference in London, the finance chief laid out a cautiously confident picture of the national economy, one that he said is beginning to respond positively to reforms and fiscal discipline.

During his address, Aurangzeb pointed to a primary budget surplus of 3.6 trillion rupees in the first half of fiscal



year 2025 as a sign that fiscal consolidation efforts are bearing fruit. Inflation, which has weighed heavily on households for months, dropped sharply to just 0.3 percent in April—a development he described as encouraging but requiring consistent effort to sustain. He reiterated the government’s

objective of lowering inflation to a stable 6 percent in the months ahead.

One of the key highlights of his remarks was the improvement in Pakistan’s credit rating by Fitch, which upgraded the country’s outlook from triple C-plus to negative B. While still far from ideal, the upgrade sug-

gests increased investor confidence in Pakistan’s economic direction and the government’s ability to manage debt and spur growth.

Aurangzeb outlined a series of ambitious goals including boosting exports to 50 billion dollars and developing a five-billion-dollar ICT freelancing industry, which he believes can become a pillar of the digital economy. He framed these targets within the government’s Five E’s Framework—a strategy designed to drive economic revival through key sectors such as exports, energy, environment, equity, and e-governance.

Environmental sustainability also featured prominently in his speech. The fi-

nance minister reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent, underscoring the government’s intention to strike a balance between economic growth and climate responsibility.

In his pitch to the international audience, Aurangzeb assured potential investors that Pakistan’s investment policy includes protections and guarantees designed to ensure returns.

He said the government was working to improve the ease of doing business, with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) playing a central role in streamlining investment approvals.

MQM-P rally protests Indian aggression, backs military

Dr Farooq Sattar further warned India of a "major surprise" in response to its actions, suggesting that Pakistan was prepared to defend itself with full force

By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: The Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) organized a significant rally outside the Karachi Press Club on Wednesday to protest against Indian aggression and express solidarity with Pakistan’s armed forces. The rally saw a large turnout of party workers and supporters, who chanted slogans advocating national unity and backing the military.

Senior MQM-P leaders, including Dr Farooq Sattar, Nasreen Jalil, Faisal Subzwari, Ali Khursheedi, and Iftikhar Alam, delivered passionate speeches to galvanize the crowd. Dr Farooq Sattar, one of the senior leaders, expressed strong condemnation of Indian military actions, claiming that they confirmed the wisdom of Pakistan’s creation. "This aggression reaffirms that our forefathers made the right decision in creating Pakistan," he declared.

Sattar further warned



India of a "major surprise" in response to its actions, suggesting that Pakistan was prepared to defend itself with full force. He ridiculed India’s military capabilities, particularly the Indian Air Force, stating that its pilots lacked the necessary training and conviction. Sattar confidently asserted that Pakistan would not only defend itself but also "down their entire squadron" if necessary.

Dr Farooq Sattar also criticized India’s vision of Akhand Bharat, asserting that the Pakistan Army would shatter this ideology, and expressed solidarity with the people of Bangladesh for rejecting Indian-backed leader-

ship.

He also touched on the ideological roots of Pakistan, referencing the two-nation theory and its ongoing relevance in the current context. He condemned Indian influence in Bangladesh and reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to its sovereignty, security, and independence.

Nasreen Jalil, another senior MQM-P leader, condemned India’s recent strikes, calling them a "shameful act of unprovoked aggression" and accusing India of using Pakistan as a scapegoat for its internal issues. Jalil warned that if war were to break out, "India’s joy will turn into despair."

Germany marks 80 years since WWII, calls for peace

By Zahid Karani

KARACHI: In a deeply reflective ceremony, the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Karachi marked the 80th anniversary of the liberation from National Socialism and the end of World War II, using the occasion to issue a powerful call for renewed global commitment to peace, democracy, and human dignity.

The memorial service brought together a solemn gathering of diplomats and dignitaries from Allied nations. Among those in atten-

Speaking with gravity and urgency, Germany’s Consul General in Karachi, Dr. Rüdiger Lotz, stressed that the lessons of 8 May 1945 remain painfully relevant in today’s fractured geopolitical landscape. "Peace is not permanent," he said. "It is fragile, and it must be protected every day—not just by treaties and institutions, but by the choices we make, the words we speak, and the values we defend."

Dr. Lotz underscored that the rise of modern authoritarianism, nationalism, and intolerance must be met



dance were the Consul General of France, the British Deputy High Commissioner, the Acting Consul General of the United States, and senior members of the German mission. Together, they paid homage to the millions who perished in the war and stood in recognition of the enduring responsibility to ensure such atrocities are never repeated.

with unflinching resistance. "We must take a clear stand: for democracy, for the rule of law, and for peaceful co-existence—not only in Europe, but wherever such principles are under threat," he said. His address served as both a memorial and a warning, urging nations not to fall into the same moral complacency that allowed fascism to flourish eight decades ago.

Sindh police brutally tortures elderly man over Rs50 extortion

By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: The officers of the Sindh police were caught on video mercilessly assaulting an elderly man outside the CIA Center near Minara Masjid, Saddar Karachi—his only offence being that he couldn’t afford to pay the daily Rs50 extortion demanded by the local police.

Facing two uniformed officers, the frail vendor offered a desperate explanation: "I couldn’t make my earnings today; I can’t give you the 50 rupees." His words fell on deaf ears. Instead of compassion, he was met with slaps, kicks, and a stream of verbal abuse. The officers, without

Sindh police, with no regard for the law they’re meant to uphold, attacked the elderly man for refusing to pay their routine extortion fee. It is alleged that the video clearly identifies Sub-Inspector Nadeem along with two fellow officers in uniform as the perpetrators.

Some bystanders were too afraid to intervene, paralyzed by the fear that they might be next. Others were simply stunned into silence by the sheer cruelty on display. This is not merely a case of misconduct—it is an indictment of a policing system that enables its officers to exploit and brutalize the very people they are supposed to protect.



the slightest concern for on-lookers or accountability, inflicted public violence on a man whose only crime was poverty.

Eyewitnesses, shaken by the scene, recorded the horrific episode. Their voices—though scattered—stood in solidarity with the victim, condemning the police’s inhuman behavior. The footage, now circulating widely, shows how

Such open criminality, carried out by those in uniform, must not go unanswered.

The nation must not look away. The Chief Justice of Pakistan is urged to take immediate suo motu notice of this disgraceful abuse of power. The people of Karachi deserve justice, and the elderly man deserves dignity, not a daily fee to survive on the streets.

METRO MATTERS

Sindh Assembly passes resolution condemning Indian aerial incursions

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: Opposition Leader in the Sindh Assembly, Ali Khursheedi, has submitted a resolution condemning the recent Indian aerial violations, which he described as a flagrant violation of international law and a direct threat to regional peace. The resolution, presented on Wednesday, was co-signed by Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) Najam Mirza, Anil Kumar, and Muhammad Daniyal, signaling broad opposition support for the stance.

During the session, Khursheedi condemned India’s "cowardly action," stressing that while Pakistan is a peace-loving nation, it will not shy away from defending its sovereignty. He asserted that while Pakistan seeks peaceful relations, it is fully capable of defending its homeland when necessary. "Pakistan is a peaceful nation, but we know how to defend our homeland," he remarked firmly.

Khursheedi further emphasized that India’s actions constitute a clear violation of international norms, which threatens the stability of the entire region. He underlined that there could be no compromise when it comes to defending Pakistan’s territorial integrity. "There can be no compromise on the defence of Pakistan," he stated resolutely.

The resolution also paid tribute to the martyrs of the recent incident and included prayers for the swift recovery of the injured. In a call for unity, Khursheedi expressed that the nation stands united in the face of external threats. "The entire nation is united and ready to defend the motherland at all costs," he said.

In addition, the resolution formally condemned India’s breach of international law, demanding global attention to what Khursheedi termed as "a grave provocation that jeopardises peace across South Asia."

Jl marks ‘Youm-e-Azm’ to protest India’s false flag operation

By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Ameer Monem Zafar has announced that the party will observe Youm-e-Azm (Determination Day) today, in response to Indian aggression following a false flag operation in occupied Kashmir. The observance, which will include citywide demonstrations and other initiatives, aims to mobilize the public in support of Pakistan’s armed forces.

Zafar made the declaration during a press conference at Idara Noor-e-Haq, the party’s Karachi headquarters, on Thursday. He was joined by senior JI leaders such as Muslim Perez, Saifuddin Advocate, Zahid Askari, and Najeebuddin Ayubi. Zafar confirmed that the observance was in line with directives from JI Pakistan Ameer Engr Hafiz Naemur Rahman.

The JI leader emphasized that Youm-e-Azm would serve as a demonstration of national unity, showing strong support for Pakistan’s military in the face of Indian provocations. "The whole nation stands united and resolute in its support of the armed forces," Zafar declared, underscoring the importance of solidarity at this critical juncture.

As part of the day’s activities, Zafar announced the activation of Emergency Response Centers across Karachi, coordinated under the Alkhidmat banner in collaboration with the Pakistan Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and 1122 rescue services. These centers are designed to provide rapid responses to emergencies and escalating tensions.

PDP calls for mandatory military service amid tensions

Press Release

KARACHI: Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman Altaf Shakoor has called for the introduction of compulsory military service for all citizens, citing the growing threats to national security. In a press briefing on Wednesday, Shakoor emphasized that military conscription, successfully implemented in several countries such as Switzerland, South Korea, Israel, and others, should be adopted by Pakistan to ensure a well-trained and mobilizable civilian force in times of crisis.

Shakoor’s call for mandatory military service comes against the backdrop of recent hostilities, including India’s airstrikes and the attack on the Neelum-Jhelum dam. He argued that Pakistan must retaliate swiftly, even suggesting that the country should target all dams in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir as a strategic response to the ongoing tensions. He warned that delaying such actions would only strengthen the enemy.

In his address, Shakoor also highlighted the internal security threats facing Pakistan, specifically pointing out the existence of "fifth columnists" or traitors within the country. He called for decisive action to root out these elements, warning that internal sabotage was weakening the nation from within.

Additionally, Shakoor urged neighboring countries like China and Bangladesh to seize the opportunity to settle longstanding grievances with India, further framing the current moment as one of regional opportunity. He praised Pakistan’s air force for its performance in the ongoing crisis and called for all branches of the military to remain vigilant and resolute in their defense of the nation.

Karachi urges dialogue in face of India’s war hysteria

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: Prominent intellectuals, poets, and cultural figures assembled at the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi to denounce India’s escalating war rhetoric, making an urgent appeal for peace, dialogue, and rationality in South Asia.

Legendary humorist and playwright Anwar Maqsood echoed the sentiment with his signature wit and pathos, remarking that in moments of national crisis, every citizen becomes a soldier. "I hold no weapon, only my pen—but I stand with my country," he said. While acknowledging Pakistan’s military response, Maqsood mourned the cost of confrontation: "There is no pride in destruction. Even the downing of five planes brings only sorrow, not victory." Joining via video link, eminent poet Iftikhar Arif decried the human toll of violence, specifically referencing the recent Pahalgam tragedy. He criticized the habitual scapegoating of Pakistan by Indian media and officials, calling for an independent investigation and urging the global community to move beyond symbolic condemnations. "This is a test for the international conscience. Peace must be pursued not just in rhetoric, but in action," he said.

Renowned academic and poet Dr Pirzada Qasim Raza Siddiqui urged both countries to replace hostility with intellect and vision. "The threat is real—not just to us, but to India as well," he said. "We must cultivate a society driven by knowledge, not enmity. Our message to the youth is clear: be ready to defend—but always speak for peace."

The press conference drew a wide audience, including journalists, poets, and writers. Among those in attendance were Veteran actor and Vice President of the Arts Council, Munawar Saeed, Secretary of the Arts Council Ejaz Farooqi, and poets Anwar Shaoor, Fatima Hassan, Huma Mir, Shahid Rassam, Farrukh Shahab, Asjad Bukhari, Shakeel Khan, Tanveer Anjum, and Afzal Ahmed Syed. In a unified stance, all participants condemned the glorification of war and called for restraint, asserting that the pen, not the sword, must lead South Asia out of its recurring cycles of hostility.

PNSC donates Rs6.7m to Citizens Foundation

By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: The Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) has made a significant contribution to community development by donating Rs6.7 million to The Citizens Foundation (TCF) as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

The donation was presented by Syed Jarar Haider Kazmi, CEO of PNSC, alongside Capt. Mustafa Kizilbash, Executive Director (Commercial), to Zia Akhtar Abbas, CEO of TCF, at the Abdullah Rakla Campus, Secondary Afternoon Section MC-3. This contribution highlights PNSC’s ongoing commitment to improving education in coastal and underserved regions, particularly focusing on children in areas such as Machar Colony, which is home to many fishermen.

Through this donation, PNSC aims to provide better educational opportunities and contribute to the welfare of communities in need.

Sukkur IBA rally defies Indian aggression

By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: Sukkur IBA University held a solidarity rally under the banner "India Started It – Pakistan Will Finish It," denouncing what its leadership described as unprovoked aggression by India. The event, held at the university’s main campus, saw a fervent turnout from faculty, staff, and students, all rallying behind Pakistan’s armed forces in a unified stand against external

threats. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Asif Ahmed Shaikh, leading the rally, delivered a forceful condemnation of India’s actions, calling them a "cowardly aggression" and vowing that Pakistan’s defenders would not stand alone. "This act has no justification. Our message is clear—Pakistan’s borders will be protected by all of us, not just our soldiers but our students, educators, and every citizen who loves this country," he

declared, reinforcing the university’s full support for the military.

Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Syed Mir Muhammad Shah extended the protest to India’s attempts to violate international water treaties, calling such tactics "a war crime in disguise." He stressed that cutting off a nation’s access to natural resources violates global norms and Pakistan had every right to respond decisively if pushed further.

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Modi's brinkmanship risks catastrophe

There is a line between assertive leadership and reckless provocation. For most responsible leaders, it is a threshold they are careful not to cross. But in Narendra Modi's India, that line no longer exists. It has not simply blurred—it has been obliterated by a man whose sense of invincibility grows in proportion to his disregard for the costs of his actions. What should have been the considered judgment of a statesman has been replaced by the impulsive posturing of a man whose politics now increasingly resemble the theatrics of a demagogue. As Modi fans the flames of militarism, nearly two billion people across South Asia are left to live under the growing shadow of nuclear uncertainty. At the heart of this crisis is not a calculated security strategy but a cynical election campaign.

India's saber-rattling in recent weeks comes not from a place of strength or necessity, but from a manufactured sense of superiority that plays well with voters whipped into nationalist fervor. In his attempt to look strong, Modi is inviting global scorn. Far beyond the echo chambers of hyper-nationalist Indian media, international analysts and defence experts are expressing deep unease. Even in India, especially among educated citizens and security experts, alarm bells are ringing. There is a growing recognition that this government's infatuation with military theatre has left little room for actual strategic coherence. The recent failures of the Indian Air Force have added a new layer of embarrassment to this unfolding crisis. The confirmed loss of multiple fighter jets, including a Rafale—a jet Modi had once presented as the crown jewel of India's defence modernization—has exposed fundamental weaknesses.

The government's attempts to suppress news of these losses only underscores its panic. When an €8 billion deal becomes the centerpiece of both defence policy and public propaganda, the stakes are high. And when the product of that deal falls from the sky, the humiliation is greater still. French publication Le Monde did not mince its words in questioning the standards of Indian pilots and the performance of the Rafale jets themselves. While the aircraft was sold to India as a symbol of cutting-edge deterrence, its poor showing in combat has forced both allies and adversaries to reevaluate India's military readiness. The truth is sobering. High-end weapons do not guarantee success in battle. They require training, cohesion, and intelligent leadership—qualities that India's current military-political apparatus seems sorely lacking.

India's own Auditor General, in a 2024 report, warned of recruitment shortfalls, logistical gaps, and inadequate training across the air force. Those warnings, evidently, were not taken seriously. Meanwhile, Pakistan, often dismissed in Indian political discourse as an inferior power, has demonstrated a level of discipline and preparedness that stands in stark contrast to the chaos in New Delhi.

The Pakistan Air Force, seasoned by years of high-pressure operations in the mountainous tribal areas, appears to have responded with calm professionalism. Its deployment of Chinese-made J-10C fighter jets, designed specifically to counter threats like the Rafale, was not an impulsive purchase, but a strategic investment. It has paid off.

In a revelation that rattled defence circles, two senior U.S. officials confirmed that at least two Indian aircraft were brought down by a Pakistani J-10C during a recent skirmish.

For Beijing, it was a vindication of its aviation technology. For Islamabad, it was validation of its tactical planning. For India, it was a crushing blow—one that pierced the illusion of invincibility long cultivated by Modi's administration. In these rare moments of real combat, where jets are tested under the harshest conditions and missiles make their case not in simulations but in the sky, it becomes clear who has prepared for reality and who has merely staged it.

But the greatest danger lies not in jets or weapons. It lies in the personality cult that now defines Indian politics. Modi has surrounded himself not with strategic minds but with sycophants. He is cheered not for prudence but for defiance. He is no longer a leader consulting advisors; he is a performer commanding applause.

This shift from leadership to spectacle is not a harmless transformation—it is a geopolitical hazard. With each provocative act, India drifts closer to the edge of a conflict that cannot be contained. One miscalculation, one stray missile, one overreaction could trigger a chain of events with irreversible consequences.

It is naive to believe that Pakistan, forever accused of restraint or inaction, will continue to absorb provocations without eventually responding in full. The region has already seen too many wars. It cannot survive a nuclear one.

Modi's assumption that nationalism will shield him from accountability is a dangerous delusion. His rhetoric may win elections, but it risks sacrificing peace. And when peace is lost, it is not his inner circle that will pay the price—it is the ordinary people of South Asia, from Kashmir to Kerala, from Lahore to Lucknow.

This is not an issue to be viewed through the prism of regional rivalry alone. The international community can no longer afford to look the other way while India plays with fire. The pretence that this is just domestic posturing must end. When a nation with nuclear weapons begins to base military decisions on political popularity rather than strategic need, it becomes a global concern. The longer world powers tolerate Modi's brinkmanship, the more likely they are to witness a tragedy unfold on their watch.

South Asia is on a knife's edge. It is being held there not by necessity, but by choice—Modi's choice. And unless that choice is challenged, called out, and condemned by the international community, the region will continue to lurch toward catastrophe.

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

National unity stands firm against Modi's militarism

By Uzma Ehtasham



There are times in a nation's journey when its very core is tested—when its people must decide whether to fracture under pressure or stand firm in unity. In the wake of India's recent aerial aggression, Pakistan has not faltered. It has risen—not with noise or hysteria, but with quiet certainty and collective resolve. What the Modi government intended as a show of force has instead become a resounding affirmation of Pakistan's national spirit. From the bustling corridors of parliament to the still corners of rural villages, one voice has reverberated with clarity and courage: "Pakistan Ka Matlab Kya, La Ilaha Illallah." This is no mere chant. It is a declaration. A reminder. A solemn promise. It speaks not just of faith, but of fidelity to a nation that refuses to kneel. India's pre-dawn intrusion into Pakistan's airspace was not just a violation—it was an act steeped in cowardice.

It came under the cover of night, a calculated provocation designed to project power while avoiding accountability. But where Modi may have expected confusion or fear, he found precision and strength. The Pakistan Air Force responded swiftly and effectively, neutralizing five Indian aircraft and

seven drones in a matter of minutes. It was a message delivered not through words, but through action. A demonstration that Pakistan is not a passive observer of its own sovereignty—it is its vigilant guardian. What unfolded in the skies above was not just a military exchange. It was the collapse of a myth. India's claims of regional superiority crumbled before the world's eyes, exposed as little more than political theatre performed for domestic consumption.

While Indian media scrambled to spin new narratives and Modi's government retreated into silence, the Pakistani nation stood tall, unflinching. There was no chaos, no panic. There was only resolve—visible in every street rally, audible in every slogan, and palpable in every conversation. Chants of "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Nara-e-Takbeer" were not merely patriotic rituals—they were expressions of defiance and declarations of belonging. Across the border, the contrast could not be more stark. The Indian state, having miscalculated both its strategy and its enemy's patience, retreated into fear. Airports were shuttered—twenty-five in total. The Kartarpur corridor, a symbol of cross-border humanity, was closed indefinitely. Even the once-proud spectacle at Wagah, a daily display of nationalist bravado, was subdued into silence.

While Pakistan continued with its normal rhythms—the Pakistan Super League roaring ahead, stadiums alive with cheer, people

going about their day—India shrank inward, consumed by its own rhetoric. This divergence tells a deeper story. It reveals how leadership, when fuelled by aggression and self-interest, can lead a country into isolation. Modi's war posturing may serve a short-term political purpose, but it has come at great cost. In trying to manufacture consent through conflict, his administration has exposed the internal fractures within India itself—rising extremism, stifled dissent, and the steady erosion of democratic norms. The hawkishness that now defines India's political climate has rendered it less a beacon of democracy and more a cautionary tale.

Pakistan, meanwhile, has emerged not as a provocateur but as a steady force. There has been no gloating, no descent into dangerous nationalism. The response has been measured, unified, and deeply rooted in the principle that sovereignty is non-negotiable. The media has played its part not as a megaphone for hysteria but as a mirror to national sentiment—firm, focused, and free from the urge to manufacture frenzy. In an era where disinformation often clouds judgment, this clarity has been vital. And so, what began as an incursion meant to intimidate has become a moment of national convergence. Modi sought to sow fear; instead, he sowed unity. He attempted to provoke chaos; instead, he reinforced discipline. Pakistan has not merely defended its airspace.

It has defended its dignity. It has done so not through grandstanding, but through a collective calm that reflects a deeper maturity—one that does not mistake aggression for strength, or silence for weakness. The world must take note. This is not just a story of military strategy or border skirmishes.

It is a larger reckoning with how nations conduct themselves in times of tension. While India's actions veer increasingly toward isolationism and internal repression, Pakistan has demonstrated how restraint, unity, and preparedness can co-exist. It is a lesson in how resolve can be both quiet and unshakable. This moment may pass, but its lessons should endure. For Pakistan, it marks the affirmation of a national character that does not cower under threat but draws strength from its convictions. And for those watching from afar, it is a reminder that peace is not preserved by silence—it is defended by vigilance, by unity, and by the willingness to stand tall when provoked. Modi's aggression has failed not just on the battlefield, but in the hearts and minds of those he sought to intimidate. Pakistan has stood its ground, not as a nation of war, but as a nation of principle. And that, in the end, may be its greatest strength.

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

The future of peace in the age of smart war

By Atiq Raja



In an age where the theatre of war has moved from muddy trenches to glowing screens, and from frontlines to fiber optic cables, the world finds itself at a disconcerting crossroads. The 21st century has not only ushered in a new era of innovation but has also thrown open the gates to new, often terrifying possibilities of conflict. Warfare, once characterized by uniforms, territory, and flags, has evolved into something far more invisible and far more intrusive. In this landscape, the fight is not only about who has more soldiers, but who has better algorithms. Modern warfare is unrecognizable from the battles that shaped the previous century. We are no longer talking only of tanks rolling over borders or fighter jets roaring through airspace. We are talking about the silent invasion of servers, the manipulation of digital truths, and the weaponization of knowledge itself.

A well-placed cyberattack today can leave a capital city in darkness, silence air traffic, and shut down hospital life support systems—all without a single soldier crossing

a border. Artificial intelligence is now firmly entrenched in defence strategy. Drones with facial recognition can follow and eliminate a target across continents. Surveillance tools using biometric data can track movements with pinpoint precision. Algorithms are already deciding who gets classified as a threat and who lives or dies. But when the trigger is no longer pulled by a human hand, who bears the burden of responsibility? And how do you begin to hold a machine accountable for a war crime? In this domain, questions of morality have not caught up with the velocity of progress. In fact, ethics often seem like an afterthought. This is not just a legal vacuum—it is a humanitarian one.

The international laws of war were not written with autonomous weapons in mind. The Geneva Conventions cannot cover AI errors or algorithmic bias. As we chase newer and more advanced ways to strike with speed and precision, we are steadily abandoning the very human element that once restrained war's worst impulses. And then there is the speed. Unlike the wars of the past where troop build-ups, diplomacy, and public statements allowed at least a sliver of time for negotiation, today's hostilities can erupt in moments. A botched line of code, a cyber provocation, or a deepfake

video could trigger retaliation before the truth is even verified. It is no exaggeration to say that we could tumble into war at the speed of a tweet.

This is not a hypothetical risk. It is a chilling reality that demands reflection. The hyper-connectivity of our world, while promising in so many ways, has made our peace fragile—breakable like glass under pressure. One wrong move in one part of the world could send tremors globally, toppling markets, triggering mass migrations, and disrupting daily life in ways unimaginable a few decades ago. That is why the call for peace can no longer be dismissed as the lofty ideal of dreamers and diplomats. In a world that bristles with instant offence, peace has become a matter of survival. It is not just the absence of war, but the active creation of resilience, empathy, and understanding. It is a strategic shield, far more powerful than any missile defence system.

Yet, this requires a tectonic shift in mindset. Global leaders must recognize that investing billions in defence while neglecting peacebuilding is like buying insurance but refusing treatment. Schools must teach children how to resolve conflict with words instead of violence. International institutions like the United Nations must be given not just ceremonial authority but the practical

means to mediate before the first cyber missile is launched. Technology will continue to march forward, but it is within our power to decide how it is used. The genius of innovation should not be judged by how efficiently it can destroy, but how wisely it can preserve. We must find ways to embed empathy into the systems we build, to code for compassion, and to train our future engineers and strategists in the ethics of restraint.

Ultimately, the future will not be defined by the brilliance of our machines, but by the choices we make with them. Will we allow our tools to shape our fate, or will we shape theirs in service of something nobler? We stand today with unmatched power at our fingertips. But true strength lies in choosing not to use it. Peace, in this charged and complex century, is no longer the passive default of quiet times—it is the active courage of a species that knows too well what it has to lose. It is our greatest wisdom, our last hope, and our most powerful weapon against a future we might not survive if we remain silent.

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

Pahalgam, Panipat and denial

By Shaukat Ahmed

I was just a child when I first visited Kashmir on a summer holiday. It was a land so breathtakingly beautiful, so softly surreal, it felt as if I'd crossed into a world where fairytales might just be true.

One afternoon, the mission head of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) invited our family to lunch. The venue was the garden of what was then called the Oberoi Palace, perched elegantly above the shimmering expanse of Dal Lake. The lake glistened in the sunlight, as still and silent as a held breath.

Midway through lunch, the UN official turned to me with the kind of playful curiosity adults often reserve for children and asked, "Tell me, what's the place you've liked most during your holiday in Kashmir?" I answered without a moment's hesitation: "Pahalgam".

Not because it looked like something out of a fable, though it easily could have, but because that was where I caught my first trout. I remember standing knee-deep in a freezing, pristine freshwater stream, my small hands nervously gripping a fly-fishing rod, while a local fishing guide held me steady from behind, the way one might brace a young apprentice braving treacherous waters.

Another guide stood right by my side, as added precaution for my age and inexperience. The icy water tugged at my legs, the forest whispered all around us, and when the line finally twitched and sprang to life, I felt a thrill so pure it eclipsed everything else. It was my first unforgettable adventure in the wilderness – and like all firsts, it left a mark that never quite fades.

Decades have passed since that cherished summer, but what I remember most fondly – and most emotionally – is not the childhood adventures or the storybook scenery, but what unfolded when the locals in Pahalgam came to know where we were originally from. At first, our entourage was perceived as American. Our accents, Western clothes, and perhaps the passports we carried – required at checkpoints – seemed to suggest as much, and we were treated with polite, if distant, courtesy. Everything changed though when our accompanying Kashmiri officials began to share that we were of Pakistani origin. That single revelation fundamentally transformed every interaction. The graciousness and civility extended to us deepened into something that felt almost reverential.

At a petrol station just outside town, the attendant's expression changed the moment he learned from our driver where we hailed from. "Aap Pakistan se hain?" he asked, his voice filled with unmistakable excitement. When my father nodded, the man waved away all mention of payment, touching his heart in a gesture that required no translation. A restaurant owner refused to present bills, brushing aside our protests with warm smiles. "You are our brother," one elderly man told my father, his weathered face expressing genuine warmth. "Your presence here is payment enough." At a small roadside shop, the owner prepared steaming cups of kehwa for our family, declining any offer of compensation with gentle insistence. My father, ever discreet, slipped a few rupees onto the counter, only to return later and find them tucked carefully beneath the windscreen wiper of our car.

This wasn't mere generosity or hospitality; it was an expression of something deeper, more profound: an affinity that defies the artificial boundaries drawn by colonial powers, and that no border, however barbed, and no policy, however brutal, has ever been able to erase.

Today, that same Pahalgam – the place where I first fell in love with Kashmir's unparalleled beauty – has become the site of a heartbreaking and devastating tragedy, and now stands as the flashpoint that threatens to intensify into an extremely dangerous and volatile confrontation between India and Pakistan. What we are witnessing is an escalation that could engulf the entire region in catastrophic conflict.

Reflexively, predictably, and with considerable vitriol, New Delhi pointed fingers at Pakistan – offering no evidence, only bravado. Rather than seek truth or extend empathy, India launched a diplomatic offensive, hoping to marshal condemnation from Western allies. But this time, the echoes did not reverberate. The response from Washington was measured; the silence from key capitals was deafening. New Delhi's frantic effort to internationalise blame found little traction. The world is not naive; it seems to have grown wary of India's pattern – accusation without inquiry, escalation without introspection – and recognises that hostilities between two nuclear-armed states can spiral into uncontrollable escalation, with consequences that could extend well beyond the region and defy any effort at containment.

As of May 7, that spiral is no longer hypothetical. What it could not justify with evidence, India now seeks to enforce through military adventurism. What it could not win on principle, it now attempts to impose through provocation. In a flagrant act of pusillanimous aggression, Indian airstrikes targeted civilian areas deep inside Pakistan in the dead of night. At least 26 lost their lives; 46 others were injured. The distinction between terror and state violence collapses when both target the innocent. What separates militants who murder tourists beneath tranquil skies from a republic that hides behind sovereignty while raining death upon defenceless families?

These strikes follow a now-familiar script: a crisis is manufactured, blame is assigned without investigation, and military theatrics are deployed to distract from internal fractures. Wars, however, are not a controlled experiment or one-act plays – and the universe does not forget the one who draws first blood. What India has begun with reckless arrogance, Pakistan will end with resolute clarity – on terms of its own choosing.

As a prelude to what may yet follow, the Pakistan Air Force shot down five Indian fighter jets, including advanced Rafales, Sukhois and a MiG-29, without suffering a single loss of its own. It was a devastating assertion of aerial supremacy, exposing India's domestically mythologised military might as highly embellished with Bollywood-inspired bravado. Earlier, on May 3, Pakistan had announced the successful training launch of the Abdali Weapon System, a 450 km-range, surface-to-surface missile equipped with advanced manoeuvrability and precision guidance. While the exact timing of the launch remains undisclosed, its message was unmistakably timed and unequivocally clear: deterrence is intact, and Pakistan's strategic forces remain alert, assured, and prepared – not to provoke, but to prevent. Ironically, that moment was steeped in historical resonance.

More than two centuries ago, it was not Abdali's sword that humbled the Maratha Confederacy, but their own arrogance that force alone could guarantee supremacy. In 1761, at the Battle of Panipat, the Marathas fell not for lack of courage, but for lack of vision. Today, the lesson returns with eerie familiarity: escalation invites consequence and history – while often lenient towards the restrained – rarely spares the proud. Delhi's current regime, intoxi-

cated by majoritarian triumphalism and emboldened by impunity, has embraced a posture of defiance, it brands compromise as weakness, dialogue as surrender and restraint as betrayal. But the world must now start to question the sustainability of this approach. While India's massive consumer market and low-cost labour present obvious commercial opportunities, its leadership's willingness to treat war as a political instrument rather than a last resort raises serious questions about its suitability as an investment destination.

Can a nation governed by a supremacist ideology truly be a trustworthy partner for peace or profit? What rational investor should commit capital to a nation whose government routinely escalates tensions to shore up domestic political support? Would it be pragmatic to establish critical supply chains in a country perpetually teetering on conflict's edge? The costs of India's belligerence may prove far more substantial than its strategists have calculated.

If New Delhi continues to suppress rather than engage, confront rather than reconcile, then the future it is building will be not one of prosperity, but of permanent siege. India's tactics – whether through demographic engineering, brutal crackdowns or unprovoked aggression – are not signs of strength but symptoms of fear. You cannot hope to mend the fault lines within your own borders by igniting fires beyond them. You cannot imprison an idea, nor vanquish a people's collective will through coercion or calculated subjugation. The human spirit, like the Liddar River in Pahalgam, finds a way to flow around the rocks placed in its path.

Until both nations confront the root of the Kashmir dispute with honesty and urgency, India and Pakistan will remain trapped in a tit-for-tat cycle – each response provoking the next, each retaliation calcifying the impasse. Progress will remain hostage to provocation and peace a casualty of pride. Let India take note of the world's quiet withdrawal of endorsement, and let it learn from Panipat that foresight ultimately triumphs over fury. Kashmir must be resolved – not as a concession to Pakistan, but as an obligation to the region and its people. No nation can truly rise while stepping over the wounded soul of its own conscience, and India cannot attain the prosperous future to which it so deeply aspires while evading the reckoning it so urgently requires.

Cheating penguins

By Dean Baker

Way back on his April 2 "Liberation Day," (it feels like a long time ago), Donald Trump released a set of "reciprocal" tariffs. These tariffs bore no obvious relationship to the tariffs or other trade barriers that other countries impose on our exports to them. While many of us were trying to figure out how Trump came up with his numbers – which included large taxes on imports from many major trading partners and longstanding allies – someone noted a 10 percent tariff on imports from the Heard and McDonald Islands.

The key problem with this tariff is that the islands are uninhabited except by penguins and other wildlife. The fact that Trump could come up with a schedule of tariffs that ostensibly took weeks of preparation and still include a set of uninhabited islands showed the ineptitude of his economic team in dealing with the issue that is most important to Trump.

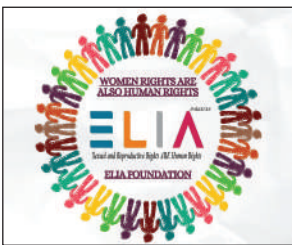
But even worse than this blunder was the fact that they couldn't acknowledge the obvious mistake. Several days later, when the tariff on the penguins' exports had become an international joke, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick insisted that the tariff was put in place deliberately. Lutnick claimed the 10 percent tariff was needed to prevent transshipment of goods to avoid tariffs placed on other countries' exports.

This claim was obviously absurd on its face. There are thousands of uninhabited islands in the world; how did Trump decide that these uninhabited islands uniquely posed a risk for avoiding tariffs through transshipment?

More importantly, there are still enormous differences in tariffs across countries and even between goods from the same countries. If we really think our customs personnel are so inept that they can't recognize that goods were not really manufactured on an uninhabited island, how will they recognize the Chinese goods (145 percent tax) that are being shipped through Vietnam (10 percent tax) in a box that says "Made in Vietnam."

The problem is made even worse by the fact that some items, like smartphones and computers, are currently exempt from Trump's 145 percent import tax. Can customs employees that can't recognize that uninhabited islands don't manufacture goods for export be counted on to correctly make these distinctions?

Lutnick's claim is obviously absurd on its face. But it is a great example of the Trump administration's determination to live in a fantasy world rather than admit mistakes and live in the same reality as the rest of us.



25 Israeli-made Heron drones intercepted: ISPR

Amid rising tensions, the armed forces stand resolute in neutralizing India's objectives, ensuring that aggression fails to prevail

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: The military has successfully shot down at least 25 Israeli-made Heron drones in response to India's continued attempts at infiltration. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement emphasized that this aggressive move by India is a clear sign of their growing frustration and confusion.

ISPR further revealed that the Pakistani military is actively collecting debris from these drones in various areas, signaling a strong counteraction to enemy advances. The armed forces are firmly neutralizing all of India's objectives and ensuring that these acts of aggression do not succeed.

In Karachi, an explosion was heard near Malir Sharafi Goth, prompting police to rush to the scene. Metal fragments were found at the location, and authorities are examining them for clues. Another set of metal



fragments was discovered in the Gulshan-e-Hadeed area, with local police investigating the situation.

The Pakistan Army also downed two drones in Gujranwala, with debris found in fields between the villages of Piro Chak and Sukh Lakan. Deputy Commissioner Naveed Ahmed confirmed that the first attack took place at 3:44 a.m. on the previous night, but

thankfully, no casualties occurred. Gujranwala police

also confirmed another drone from India had been targeted near the town of Tokriyan.

In Lahore, three drones were brought down in the Walton area, leaving four officers injured. The sounds of explosions and gunfire prompted residents in Walton and Burki to rush outdoors, and sirens could also be heard in the area.

In Rawalpindi, drones were shot down near Food Street, the Race Course

Transit Camp, and Scheme 3. One person was critically injured when a drone crashed near Food Street. Sources reported that the drone collided with a tree before crashing into a shop, setting it on fire and causing damage to the shop's windows and other belongings. Law enforcement has sealed off the area and launched an investigation.

In the town of Dhaman, Chakwal, a drone was found after crashing near the village of Dewalia, and police have secured the debris. Further south, Bahawalpur witnessed another drone attack foiled by the Pakistan Army.

In the town of Ghotki, a drone crashed within the jurisdiction of the Dadu Laghari Police Station, injuring two farmers, one of whom later succumbed to his wounds in the hospital. Another drone was shot down near the Nankana Sahib district's Shahkot area.

PSL PAKISTAN SUPER LEAGUE



Gladiators set new PSL record as Rossouw, Nawaz score centuries

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Rilee Rossouw and Hasan Nawaz etched their names into T20 cricket history on Tuesday, becoming the first pair to score centuries in the same innings of a HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) match—and only the 10th duo ever to achieve the feat in all men's T20 cricket. Their explosive batting display helped Quetta Gladiators crush Islamabad United by 109 runs and set a new PSL record total of 263-3.

Rossouw was the first to reach the three-figure mark, blasting 104 runs off 46 balls, which included 14



boundaries and six sixes. After Saud Shakeel fell for 23, Rossouw found a dynamic partner in Nawaz, and the duo put together a rapid 134-run partnership

off just 61 balls. Rossouw was dismissed in the 16th over, but Nawaz continued to dominate.

Nawaz completed his century with a boundary off

the final ball of the innings, finishing unbeaten on 100 from 45 balls, including 9 sixes and 7 fours. The Gladiators' total of 263-3 is now the highest ever posted in PSL history, surpassing the previous record of 262-3 set by Multan Sultans in 2023.

With this victory, Quetta Gladiators have secured their place in the top two spots for the playoffs, giving them a second-chance route to the final. For Islamabad United, the road to the playoffs now hinges on their upcoming match against Karachi Kings on May 10, where a win will confirm their spot in the next stage of the competition.

PSL 10 matches likely to be relocated amid growing tensions

By our correspondent

LAHORE: The HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) 10 is facing potential changes in its hosting venues due to ongoing diplomatic tensions in the region, which have raised concerns about the safety and logistics of holding the remaining matches in Pakistan. As a result, Dubai and Doha are being considered as alternative locations for the conclusion of the tournament. This potential move comes as a response to the escalating uncertainty over hosting fixtures in cities such as Rawalpindi, Multan, and Lahore, which were originally scheduled as venues for the remainder of the tournament.

Karachi's National Bank Stadium, which is currently hosting the Women's T20 Cup, is also being explored as a domestic interim solution to accommodate the remaining matches of PSL 10. However, no final decision has been made, and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is continuing discussions with franchise owners and other stakeholders to finalize the arrangements.

Sources have revealed that multiple scheduling scenarios are being considered for the four remaining matches that were initially planned for Rawalpindi. A crucial meeting is set to take place between the Ministry of Interior and PCB officials to assess the evolving security situation and determine the best course of action. This meeting will play a pivotal



role in deciding whether the PSL matches will proceed as scheduled or be postponed.

The ongoing security concerns, including the closure of airspace and rising regional tensions, have complicated the logistics of hosting the matches. It is expected that these factors may lead to further delays or potential cancellations. In light of these developments, there is an increasing possibility that PSL matches may be postponed, depending on the outcomes of the meeting and any further developments in the region.

With just four knockout matches and four playoff games remaining, the tension surrounding the tournament's conclusion has reached a boiling point. In the meantime, a PSL match between Karachi Kings and Peshawar Zalmi, originally scheduled for Thursday in Rawalpindi, has been postponed due to security concerns. The postponement was decided following discussions between PCB officials, franchise owners, and players, who evaluated the risks posed by the evolving security situation.

PCB postpones HBL PSL match in Rawalpindi

By our correspondent

LAHORE: The HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) match scheduled for Thursday in Rawalpindi between Karachi Kings and Peshawar Zalmi has been postponed due to concerns over the evolving security situation in the region. This decision followed a meeting involving officials from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), team franchise owners, and players, where the impact of rising regional tensions was discussed.

In light of these developments, the PCB is considering relocating all remaining PSL 10 matches to Karachi to ensure the safety of players and reduce logistical challenges.

Meanwhile, the already heightened security situation in Rawalpindi was further exacerbated by the crash of a drone



near the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. The authorities quickly sealed off the area, with early reports suggesting that the drone may have been intended for surveillance purposes.

These developments continue to cast uncertainty on the remainder of the tournament, with further adjustments expected depending on the evolving security dynamics.

'We grew up to the sound of bullets and blasts': Rizwan

By our correspondent

KARACHI: In a poignant statement on social media, Pakistan's ODI team captain Mohammad Rizwan shared his reflections on the long history of conflict that has shaped the country. He expressed how generations of Pakistanis have grown up amidst gunfire and explosions, describing the land as one "soaked in the blood of martyrs."



Rizwan emphasized the resilience and spirit of the youth in Pakistan, stating that many have developed a profound sense of determination,

comparing their love for sacrifice to others' love for life.

Drawing on the teachings of Islam, Rizwan highlighted the country's commitment to peace, noting that, according to the Holy Quran, war should never be waged unless forced upon them. He added that despite Pakistan's enduring struggle with terrorism, each conflict has only served to unite the nation, awaken-

ing a sense of strength and solidarity among its people.

Rizwan's words carried a message of hope and resilience, urging the nation to remain courageous, steadfast, and just in the face of adversity, while rejecting oppression. His statement reflects a strong call to unite against challenges, underscoring the importance of tolerance and strength in times of trial.

Pakistan vows to act in self-defense, PM tells US

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has firmly conveyed to the United States that Pakistan reserves the right to take necessary action in self-defense in response to India's recent unprovoked military actions. This was made clear during a recent conversation with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who reached out to Sharif to discuss the escalating tensions in South Asia.

During their discussion, Prime Minister Sharif outlined the gravity of the situation, stating that India's attacks had directly violated Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He stressed that these military actions had not only undermined Pakistan's security but had also posed a significant threat to the peace and stability of the entire South Asian region.

In response, Rubio reaffirmed that the United States was closely monitoring the situation. He reiterated the US's commitment



to promoting peace and stability in South Asia, urging both Pakistan and India to engage in dialogue and de-escalate tensions. Despite this diplomatic push for calm, Sharif made it clear that Pakistan's right to defend itself would not be compromised.

Sources from the Prime Minister's House indicate that both leaders agreed to remain in regular contact as the situation continues to evolve, underscoring the importance of keeping diplomatic channels open. Prime Minister Sharif also ex-

pressed his gratitude for US President Donald Trump's attention to the matter, acknowledging the concern shown by the United States regarding the current security challenges in the region.

Rubio further reinforced the US stance, assuring that Washington would continue to monitor developments closely. The conversation highlighted the delicate balance of international diplomacy in South Asia, with both sides signaling a desire for stability but also emphasizing the gravity of the security situation.

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IHC judge barred from hearing case

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Justice Babar Sattar expressed profound frustration over being barred from proceeding with a contempt of court case against the Director General of Immigration and Passports. In a rare and dramatic moment, the judge referred to the situation as "the first time in history" that a division bench had prevented a high court judge from continuing proceedings.

The case revolves around the repeated failure to remove a citizen's name from the Exit Control List (ECL), despite clear orders from the court. During Thursday's hearing, Justice



Sattar confronted court officials about the unexplained absence of the case from the court's cause list, asserting that the judicial order had been blatantly ignored.

The Assistant Attorney General, Deputy Registrar, and Assistant Registrar were present at the hearing. The Assistant Attorney General explained that the division bench had suspended the earlier order made by the single bench, effectively halting any contempt proceedings. He swiftly rejected this claim, stating that a division bench does not have the authority to override a decision made by a constitutional court without consulting the Supreme Court.

Justice Sattar made it clear that the High Court is a constitutional court, and that the division bench merely serves as a forum, not a superior judicial body. When the Assistant Registrar confirmed that an administrative order had instructed them not to issue the cause list, the judge demanded to know who had given the directive. The Deputy Registrar explained that while no explicit order had been given to stop the proceedings, the matter was now referred to the division bench.

EU expresses concern over escalating Pakistan-India tensions

News Desk

BRUSSELS: The European Union (EU) has voiced serious concern over the rapidly escalating tensions between Pakistan and India, urging both countries to exercise restraint and engage in dialogue to prevent further loss of life. The statement, issued by Josep Borrell, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, and endorsed by the European Council, comes in the wake of a devastating terrorist attack in Pahal-gam, Jammu and Kashmir, on April 22, which claimed the lives of innocent civilians.

The EU strongly condemned the attack, calling it a "heinous terrorist act" and reiterating that terrorism can never be justified under any circumstances. Borrell stressed the Union's deep concerns about the mounting tensions in the region and the potential for further violence. He underscored that the escalation poses significant risks not only to the lives of civilians but also to regional stability.

The EU has called on both Pakistan and India to de-escalate the situation and to re-



frain from any further military actions that could lead to additional civilian casualties. The Union's statement emphasized the importance of dialogue, urging both nations to return to the negotiating table and work towards a peaceful resolution in line with international law.

Borrell reaffirmed the EU's commitment to supporting efforts that aim to protect civilian lives and mitigate the crisis, underscoring the Union's readiness to work with both parties to help prevent further deterioration of the situation. The EU's call for restraint and diplomacy highlights the growing international concern about the region's volatile dynamics and the urgent need for de-escalation.

US newspaper reports high morale in Pakistan

News Desk

WASHINGTON: A US newspaper has offered an in-depth analysis of the escalating conflict between Pakistan and India, drawing attention to the impact of the ongoing crisis on both nations. According to the report, airports across India are now closed, with several

states grappling with power outages, reflecting the disruptions caused by the heightened state of alert.

Meanwhile, morale in Pakistan appears to remain exceptionally high, as citizens rally behind their armed forces and government in response to India's military actions. The report highlights how, despite the

uncertainty surrounding the future trajectory of the conflict, there is a strong sense of unity and national pride in Pakistan. Citizens are reportedly celebrating the counteractions taken by the military, with many publicly calling for a firm and fitting response to India's aggressive stance.

The people's support for

their armed forces and government is a clear indication of the prevailing sentiment in the country, as Pakistan's leadership faces mounting pressure to protect national interests. While the article refrains from making any definitive predictions about how the conflict will unfold, it underscores the growing tension in the region.