

## PM says Pakistan shot down six enemy aircraft

Shahbaz Sharif urged Pakistan to push forward economically through hard work and dedication, while expressing gratitude to President Trump for his role in brokering the ceasefire

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has announced that after thorough investigations, Pakistan successfully shot down six enemy aircraft, including Rafale jets, MiGs, and drones. He said these aircraft belonged to an enemy who considered itself the regional enforcer of South Asia.

The remarks came during a special ceremony held at the Pakistan Monument Shakarparian in Islamabad to mark the day of gratitude. The event was attended by military leadership, federal ministers, foreign diplomats, and other dignitaries. The Prime Minister was the chief guest, accompanied by the chairman joint chiefs of staff committee and service chiefs. The ceremony included special prayers for the martyrs and a flypast by



Pakistan Air Force's Shaheen squadron, saluting the nation's resolve and spirit. In his address, Shahbaz Sharif stressed the need for Pakistan to advance economically with hard work and dedication. He thanked US President Donald Trump for his role in securing the ceasefire. Recalling the conflict's origins, the Prime Minister mentioned the painful events of 1971 and expressed hope that Pakistan's forces would achieve a victory so deci-

sive that the enemy would never dare threaten the country again. He said the enemy had dismissed Pakistan's peace offers with disdain.

Shahbaz Sharif described a meeting on the night of May 9 and 10 with military chiefs, where it was agreed that the enemy had crossed the final red line by attacking civilians, including a six-year-old child, sending a message that it could strike inside Pakistan. He said the Army Chief in-

formed him at 2:30 am about missile strikes by the enemy and requested permission to respond decisively. Hours later, a ceasefire request was received, which the Prime Minister accepted as a sign of Pakistan's success.

The Prime Minister paid tribute to the sacrifices of martyrs, calling the victory a rare blessing in centuries. He said the enemy was left with no place to hide after Pakistan's powerful response, describing it as a "slap" the enemy would remember forever. Shahbaz Sharif urged the nation to unite and begin the journey Pakistan was created for — economic progress and national unity.

He also expressed gratitude to friendly nations and recognised the important role of US President Trump in easing tensions and promoting peace.

## MQM-P says India misjudged Pakistan's resolve

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Federal Minister Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has issued a pointed reminder to India, declaring that New Delhi had underestimated the strength and resolve of the Pakistani nation.

His remarks came during a special ceremony held at the Governor House in Sindh to mark what officials are calling Pakistan's "day of gratitude" following the country's recent military response to Indian hostilities. Standing before a crowd of political leaders, civil society members and security officials, Dr Siddiqui underscored the gravity of the recent cross-border tensions.

He accused India of recklessly targeting civilian homes, mosques, and non-combat zones—acts he described as both unjustifiable and provocative. Yet, he maintained, Pakistan's response was measured, deliberate and precise, limited to military targets but potent enough to send a message that could not be ignored. "India attacked homes and sacred places. But we did not stoop to that level. Our answer was strong, strategic, and dignified," said Siddiqui, speaking with both restraint and pride.

## Tessori says regional power balance reestablished

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori has said that Pakistan has successfully restored the balance of power in South Asia, asserting that the country's principled and strategic response to Indian aggression has reaffirmed its standing as a strong and responsible regional player.

Speaking at a thanksgiving ceremony held at the Governor House in Karachi, Tessori addressed an audience that included Federal Minister Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, families of fallen soldiers, students, and members of civil society.

The event was part of a wider national observance in the wake of recent military tensions between Pakistan and India.

Tessori condemned what he described as India's "cowardly" cross-border strikes, carried out under the cover of darkness, saying the attacks targeted civilian homes and places of worship.

"Such tactics may provoke outrage, but they will never succeed in breaking the resolve of a united Pakistan," he said.

Tessori emphasized that Pakistan's armed forces had shown restraint and maturity by deliberately avoiding civilian areas in their response. "This is the difference between us and those who seek to provoke chaos—we act with purpose and humanity," the governor remarked, drawing loud applause from attendees.

## COAS praises media response to Indian propaganda

General Munir's remarks coincided with officials declaring a "historic victory" after a military clash hailed nationally as "Maarka-e-Haq," underscoring a defining moment in Pakistan's security narrative

By Asghar Ali Mubarak



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir, has publicly commended the nation's media for what he described as a "memorable and dignified response" to the wave of disinformation emanating from India during the recent spike in tensions between the two neighbors.

Speaking in an informal setting with journalists during a thanksgiving ceremony, the army chief portrayed the media as a pillar of strength, crediting it for its honest and responsible reporting that stood in stark contrast to what he characterized as misleading narratives from across the border.

General Munir's remarks came as the country marked what officials have termed a "historic victory" following a military engagement referred to domestically as "Maarka-e-Haq."

The thanksgiving event unfolded with formal salutes in Islamabad and provincial capitals, alongside rallies and gatherings in cities na-

tionwide, where ordinary citizens honored the sacrifices of soldiers and expressed solidarity with the armed forces. "The entire nation stood united in the face of aggression, and our media's response made us proud," General Munir said. "It was honest, responsible, and powerful—something the Indian media won't forget."

His words underscored a deep confidence in Pakistan's press corps, praising their role in communicating a truthful narrative amid heightened tensions and a charged information environment. Unlike the Indian media, which the general accused of fabricating stories and spreading misinfor-

mation, Pakistan's journalists, he said, did not conceal facts or distort the truth. "We didn't hide anything—we showed the truth. That is our strength and our pride," he added.

The ceremony itself was emblematic of a nation rallying behind its military at a fraught moment in its history. The 31-gun salute in Islamabad and 21-gun salutes in provincial capitals lent a solemn dignity to the proceedings, while public events demonstrated widespread popular support for the armed forces. The celebrations were more than patriotic ritual; they were a deliberate assertion of unity and resilience in the face of external pressure.

## Karachi faces federal, provincial neglect despite economic role

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: The largest and most productive city continues to suffer neglect from both the federal and Sindh provincial governments despite its significant contribution to the country's foreign exchange, revenue, and tax income.

Take the Karimabad underpass project, for example, which was scheduled for completion in June this year but remains unfinished. When work began in May 2023, inflation was soaring at 38 percent, but now it has fallen to less than half a percent. Interest rates have decreased, prices of cement and steel have dropped, and labour costs have not increased—yet the project's estimated cost has surged from Rs 135 crore to Rs 381 crore. Who is accountable for



this ballooning expense?

The Sindh government's current fiscal budget includes 889 schemes for Karachi, but many of these projects have either not progressed or have not even received funding.

Is anyone prepared to answer for this lack of delivery? Additionally, the budget mentions six externally funded projects worth Rs 10.3 billion for Karachi. Despite delayed completion and questionable progress, these projects are recorded in official documents as satisfactory. Are the international donors accountable for these delays, or do they simply turn a blind eye?

Prime Minister's visits to Karachi often include promises to release funds for roads, water supply, and other essential projects.

Yet, the promised funds rarely translate into tangible progress. Should the Prime Minister be held responsible for this failure in execution? Ultimately, the question remains: who is truly responsible for the fate of "Mai Kolachi's" city? Why does Karachi, despite being the country's financial backbone, continue to face such neglect? Is there anyone willing to answer these pressing concerns?

## Danish paper strips away India's false media narratives

"Indian media is shamelessly lying about imagined triumphs over Pakistan," the editorial tore into jingoistic reporting, accusing broadcasters of fabricating victories to stoke nationalist fervor

News Desk

COPENHAGEN: India's international image has taken another hit after Denmark's leading daily, Politiken, issued a stinging editorial accusing Indian media outlets of disseminating fabricated stories of military success against Pakistan, using manipulated visuals and misleading footage to bolster nationalist sentiment.

Under the headline "Indian media is shamelessly lying about imagined triumphs over Pakistan," the editorial did not mince words. Written by Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, a respected columnist and Professor of Communication at the University of Copenhagen, the piece criticises Indian coverage of recent cross-border tensions as dangerously irresponsible.

Describing the reporting as "not only incorrect and misleading but astonishingly dangerous and offensive," Nielsen underscored how the situation, already charged with hostility between two nuclear-armed neighbors, was made more volatile by these distorted narratives. What has alarmed international observers further, the editorial claims, is how the Indian government has re-



sponded—not with transparency or accountability—but with censorship.

According to Politiken, instead of confronting the issue of misinformation head-on, Indian authorities moved to suppress dissent. Foreign news websites were blocked, and independent Indian media platforms attempting to report with nuance were muzzled. The government, the article argues, is using the broad and politically convenient label of "fake news" to silence critical reporting, creating a media climate that is increasingly hostile to independent journalism.

The Danish editorial comes at a time when media freedom in India is facing mounting scrutiny from international watchdogs. Concerns about state interference, shrinking space for dissent, and the blurring line between propaganda and

journalism have been growing steadily. This latest accusation from Politiken only sharpens the spotlight on how conflict reporting in India is being shaped by nationalist narratives that risk distorting public perception and fuelling regional instability.

As tensions remain high and the risk of escalation between India and Pakistan persists, the role of media—particularly in a democracy as complex as India's—is once again under the microscope.

The international community is watching closely, not just the headlines being made, but the intentions and mechanisms behind them. For many, the Politiken editorial is not just a critique of India's media, but a warning about the consequences of narrative warfare in an already fragile geopolitical landscape.

## Israel launches airstrikes on Yemen's key port city

News Desk

SANAA/BAITUL MAQDAS: Israeli warplanes have carried out a series of airstrikes on the Yemeni coastal city of Hudaydah, intensifying an already volatile regional landscape and drawing fresh concerns over the widening scope of Middle East conflict. According to Israeli media reports, the attacks specifically targeted infrastructure used by the Houthis-majority group, Ansar Allah, including strategic sites at the Salif and Isa ports.

Arab broadcasters, relaying information from Sanaa, confirmed intense bombardment in and around the Hudaydah port. Fires were seen engulfing oil storage facilities at the Salif port, underlining the scale of destruction and adding fuel to fears of an environmental and humanitarian fallout.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz were reported to have directly overseen the operation. Their decision to strike was described as a response to what Israel sees as continued threats from the Houthis, whom it accuses of destabilising maritime routes and aligning militarily with Iran. An Israeli military spokesperson warned pointedly that should the Houthis persist in defiance, "all ports in the region

could be destroyed."

In a statement following the attack, Defence Minister Katz claimed that the strikes had successfully dismantled Houthi strongholds at Hudaydah port. He further declared that Israel's next objective would be the leadership of the group, singling out Abdul Malik al-Houthi, the Houthi movement's reclusive leader, as a direct target. The strikes represent a major escalation in Israel's military posture beyond its traditional borders.

## India wanted to bury Kashmir issue, but it resurfaced: Mashahid

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Former senator Mashahid Hussain Syed has said that Pakistan has gained a clear advantage over India, with the chiefs of all three armed forces demonstrating remarkable strategy. He added that India had intended to bury the Kashmir issue, but it has come to the forefront once again.

The remarks were made during a seminar organized by the Karachi Council on Foreign Relations at the Quid-e-Azam Museum, titled "Pakistan, India's Recent War: The South Asia Crisis and Its Impact on



Both Countries." Speakers at the event emphasized that war benefits no one and stressed that issues such as Kashmir and the Indus Waters Treaty must be resolved through dialogue at the negotiating table.

Ikram Sehgal, patron-in-chief of the Karachi Council on Foreign Relations, former senator Mashahid Hussain, and South Asia analyst Michael Kugelman highlighted the use of artificial intelligence in spreading deepfake news during

the recent conflict.

They noted that the Kashmir dispute has once again been brought into sharp focus following the war.

In a panel discussion, senior analysts Mazhar Abbas, Owais Tauheed, former FBR chairman Shabir Zaidi, and defence analyst Wajeeda Hasan observed that understanding India's current situation requires an insight into Narendra Modi's mindset. They pointed out that while Pakistan's defence budget stands at \$10 billion, India's is \$81 billion, yet the Pakistani armed forces performed excellently.



# Israeli massacre continues in Gaza with fresh 109 killed

The devastation peaked on Friday as relentless Israeli bombardment claimed 93 lives and left over 200 injured, Arab media in Gaza reported, marking one of the deadliest days yet

News Desk

OCCUPIED BAITUL MAQDAS: Israeli airstrikes over the past 24 hours have wrought devastating consequences in Gaza, with the Palestinian health ministry reporting that 109 Palestinians have been killed and 216 wounded amid the continuing violence.

The scale of the destruction is particularly acute on Friday, when 93 lives were lost and over 200 injured due to relentless bombardment from Israeli forces, according to Arab media sources in Gaza. This recent surge of violence comes against the backdrop of a ceasefire that collapsed in



March, after which the Palestinian health ministry says nearly 3,000 Palestinians have died and over 8,000 have been injured in Israeli attacks.

The toll of suffering since the conflict's inception on 7 October 2023 is staggering, with over 53,000 Palestini-

ans reported killed and more than 120,000 wounded in Gaza alone. These figures speak to a prolonged and brutal confrontation that has left deep scars on the densely populated territory.

Amid this turmoil, Israeli claims that Hamas has been operating a command centre

within a European hospital have come under scrutiny. Investigations by British and Turkish media have challenged these assertions, revealing that the tunnel cited by Israel is located far from the hospital targeted in the airstrikes. This revelation raises serious questions about the accuracy of the military's intelligence and the justification for attacks that have caused such extensive civilian casualties.

The use of bunker-buster bombs by Israeli forces has compounded the devastation, with reports indicating that over 80 people, including women and children, have been killed in the wake of these powerful explo-

sions. The humanitarian toll is further exacerbated by the destruction of vital infrastructure and the displacement of countless families, intensifying the already dire conditions faced by Gaza's population.

In a notable intervention, former US president Donald Trump commented on the crisis, acknowledging the severe hunger affecting many in Gaza but striking a cautious note of optimism by suggesting "many good things" might be expected in the coming month. His remarks, however, offered little detail on what these positive developments might entail amid the ongoing violence and suffering.

## Sri Lanka in Karachi celebrated Vesak

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The Consulate General of Sri Lanka in Karachi, in association with the Sri Lankan community, organized a 'Vesak Day' religious festival at the Consulate premises.

The festive was observed virtually by Venerable Hangunnawe Mahinda Thero, Assistant Principal of Hanwella Mayadunna National School and resident monk of Sudu Ella Maha Bodhi Viharaya, Kaluaggala, Hanwella. The event included Buddha Vandana, Dhamma Deshana, Vesak Dansela, and Vesak Bathi Gee, and was attended by members of the Sri Lankan community and Pakistan friends of Sri Lanka.

To mark this sacred occasion, the Consulate General was decorated with Vesak lanterns, Buddhist flags, and lights.

As a gesture of compassion and generosity associated with Vesak, the Consulate also organized a blood donation campaign in collaboration with Indus Hospital in Karachi, with the participation of Sri Lankan community members and local well-wishers.

Speaking at the event, Consul General Jagath Abeywarnna highlighted that having an event such as this in Karachi reflects the deep-rooted cultural and religious ties between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. He believes that it will further strengthen people-to-people connections through mutual respect and shared values.

## President, PM honor PAF's squadron leader

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited the home of Squadron Leader Usman Yusuf to honour his sacrifice in defence of the nation. The martyred officer lost his life serving Pakistan, and both leaders expressed deep condolences to his family.

President Zardari met with Usman Yusuf's father and relatives, offering prayers for the departed soul and praying for his elevated status in the hereafter. He paid tribute to the brave officer, saying the entire nation salutes the sacrifices of its soldiers.

Similarly, Prime Minister



Shehbaz Sharif, accompanied by Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Information Minister Atta Tarar, and Army Chief General Asim Munir, also visited the martyr's family to express sympathy and respect. Shehbaz Sharif prayed for the martyr's elevated status and praised his courage and dedication to duty.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Kamra Airbase where he met with the air force pilots who successfully shot down Indian Rafale jets. He praised their exceptional skill and bravery, saying the Pakistani "Shahenshah" (Falcons) dealt a blow that Prime Minister Modi would remember forever.

## Torkham witnesses patriotic display on Youm-e-Tashakur

By Sudhir Ahmad Afridi

TORKHAM: Residents of Khyber district marked Youm-e-Tashakur (Thanksgiving Day) with a grand rally at the Torkham border, voicing unwavering support for the Pakistan Armed Forces.

The event echoed similar commemorations across the country and was a vivid display of public patriotism.

Organised by the local administration, the rally began at the Machni checkpoint in Landi Kotal and proceeded to the Torkham border.

A large and diverse gathering including tribal elders, customs clearing agents, police officials, youth, and local citizens took part. Chants of "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Pak Fauj Zindabad" rang out, accompanied by vocal condemnations of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and recent Indian aggression.

In Landi Kotal, a formal ceremony at the Tehsil Compound was led by Assistant Commissioner Adnan Mumtaz, and attended by prominent figures from the community.

The participation of senior tribal leaders, including Barkatullah Shinwari and Haji Azimullah Shinwari of the Torkham Transport Union, added weight to the proceedings.

Leaders from the Customs Clearing Agents Association and respected elders such as Haji Mujeeb Shinwari and Shah Wali Shinwari were also present.

## Kamal announces crackdown on substandard drugs from 19 May

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal has announced a robust nationwide crackdown on fake and substandard medicines, set to begin on 19 May. This intensified campaign aims to protect public health by targeting counterfeit pharmaceuticals through comprehensive market surveillance and surprise raids triggered by confidential complaints from across the country.

The announcement came during a high-level meeting chaired by Mustafa Kamal, which brought together provincial health ministers, including Punjab's Khawaja Imran Nazir

and Sindh's Azra Afzal Pechuho. The gathering reviewed current efforts to eradicate counterfeit medicines and reinforce regulatory frameworks that ensure drug safety and efficacy.

A spokesperson for the health ministry stated that, under the federal minister's leadership, the crackdown will relaunch with extensive inspections and coordinated action. This will involve federal and provincial health authorities working closely with customs, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and other relevant bodies. The focus will extend beyond the retail market to include stringent monitoring of pharmaceuti-

cal factories and distribution networks, aiming to dismantle the supply chains of illegal medicines.

To empower citizens in this effort, the ministry plans to enhance public awareness and provide practical tools to identify fake medicines and report suspicious activity promptly. Central to this initiative is the introduction of a new mobile application developed by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP). The app will feature barcode scanning and other verification methods, enabling users to quickly check the authenticity of medicines and distinguish genuine products from counterfeits.

## Tabba Heart Institute hosts cardiology session on prevention

By our correspondent

KARACHI: A Continuing Medical Education (CME) session on preventive cardiology was held at the Arts Auditorium, hosted by Tabba Heart Institute in collaboration with the Karachi chapter of the Pakistan Cardiac Society. The event brought together leading cardiologists and healthcare professionals



to exchange insights on strategies aimed at reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease through early intervention and lifestyle modification.

Dr Basheer Haif, Director of Tabba Heart Institute, opened the session with a keynote address underscoring the urgency of integrating prevention into routine cardiac care. He was joined by Professor Khawar Kazmi, a well-respected authority in

the field and Head of Preventive Cardiology at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), who echoed the call for a paradigm shift from reactive treatment to proactive health planning.

The forum featured contributions from a range of experts, including Dr Irfan Ilahi Chandna and Dr Farzana Amir, the Head of Rehabilita-



tion at Tabba Heart, who spoke about the link between cardiac rehabilitation and long-term patient outcomes.

Dr Akram Sultan, a cardiologist affiliated with Tabba Heart and also the Coordinator of the Pakistan Cardiac Society's Karachi chapter, highlighted the role of professional societies in promoting evidence-based guidelines across the country's healthcare system.

## METRO MATTERS

### Karachi roads blocked as JI protests water shortages

By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi staged a series of protests across the city on Friday, denouncing the worsening water crisis and accusing the Sindh government of colluding with the notorious tanker mafia. Demonstrators blocked key roads, demanding urgent restoration of proper water supply to Karachi's parched neighborhoods.

One of the main protests was held near the NIPA water hydrant, where JI Karachi chief Monem Zafar delivered a scathing speech against the Pakistan People's Party (PPP)-led provincial government. Zafar termed the situation a "water assault" on the city and accused the authorities of willfully depriving half of Karachi's population of clean water. He also held the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) responsible for what he called a shared legacy of failure, particularly in relation to the long-delayed K4 water supply project.

Zafar lambasted Karachi's mayor and Sindh's chief minister, pointing out the irony that a city responsible for 96% of Sindh's tax revenue remains without basic amenities. He cited repeated failures of major water pipelines and questioned why Karachi's needs are consistently deprioritized by those in power. Recalling JI's past contributions under former mayor Nematullah Khan, Zafar noted that earlier projects—K1, K2, and K3—were all launched during the party's tenure. He said the K4 project, once envisaged at Rs25 billion, has ballooned to Rs200 billion with its intended supply slashed from 650 to 260 million gallons of water.

Zafar issued a stern warning to the provincial leadership, stating that JI would escalate its protests to the gates of the Chief Minister and Governor Houses if the water crisis persists. He alleged that government functionaries were more invested in profits from the tanker mafia than in resolving Karachi's chronic water scarcity. The protests reflect mounting public frustration with Karachi's deteriorating water infrastructure and the perceived nexus between officials and private profiteers, as city residents continue to suffer from dry taps and inflated water prices.

### Elephants at Karachi Safari Park responding well to TB treatment

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: Medical teams have expressed satisfaction over the health of elephants undergoing tuberculosis (TB) treatment at Safari Park, Karachi, as the animals continue to respond positively to a carefully managed care plan. According to both local veterinarians and international specialists, the ongoing treatment efforts are showing encouraging signs.

Dr Budhika Bhandara, a wildlife health expert from Sri Lanka leading the treatment program during her 17-day visit that began on 1 May, told reporters that the elephants, though displaying clinical symptoms, remain physically stable and are receiving appropriate care.

"We are treating them very well," Dr Bhandara said during a press briefing at the Safari Park. "They are not weak. We have started with a two-month initial phase of daily medication, which will be followed by a continuation phase, all according to standard operating procedures."

To protect the animals and reduce the risk of disease transmission, park authorities have restricted access to the elephant enclosure for a year. Officials said the decision was necessary to minimize external stressors and safeguard both the animals and the public.

Joining Dr Bhandara at the media briefing were Safari Park's Director of Media Mr Daniyal Siyal and senior medical expert Dr Aamir. The panel shared details about the treatment protocols in place, the current condition of the elephants, and future plans for long-term care.

The initiative is being carried out under the directives of Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab. His administration has stressed the importance of public health alongside a strong commitment to the ethical treatment of wildlife. The collaboration with international experts and strict adherence to veterinary guidelines mark a significant step in addressing TB among captive animals in Pakistan.

### KMC marks Youm-e-Tashakur with tribute to armed forces

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) commemorated Youm-e-Tashakur with national pride and unity at a vibrant ceremony held at Baradari Polo Ground, celebrating the success of Operation Murus Al-Bayan and honoring Pakistan's armed forces.

The event was led by Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, who expressed deep gratitude for the armed forces' unwavering sacrifices in safeguarding the country's sovereignty. Addressing a large gathering, he paid rich tribute to the military personnel, stating that their valor and dedication had ensured national peace and security in the face of aggression.

Joining the mayor in the celebration were Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad, Municipal Commissioner Afzal Zaidi, Managing Director of Sindh Solid Waste Management Board Tariq Ali Nizamani, Managing Director of the Water and Sewerage Board Ahmad Ali Siddiqui, Chief Operating Officer Asadullah Khan, Parliamentary Leader in the City Council Karamullah Waqasi, members of the City Council, City Wardens, and a large number of KMC officers and employees.

The ceremony commenced with the national anthem, followed by resounding patriotic slogans echoing support for the Pakistan Army, Navy, and Air Force. Participants, including government officials and civic workers, stood united in expressing gratitude to the defenders of the nation.

The event was marked by a display of national solidarity, with attendees waving flags and expressing pride in Pakistan's armed forces. Mayor Wahab stated that such ceremonies are vital to reinforcing the country's spirit and acknowledging the sacrifices made by those who stand at the frontlines of defense.

"Youm-e-Tashakur is not just a day of celebration—it is a solemn reminder of the price paid for our peace and the strength we draw from our unity," Wahab remarked. The KMC's celebration of Youm-e-Tashakur underscored the city's firm support for the armed forces and its shared commitment to national resilience and pride.

### Police prevented from arresting couple over love marriage

News Desk

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court has issued a strong directive restraining police from arresting a young couple who chose to marry of their own free will, highlighting concerns over unlawful harassment. During the hearing of a petition filed to protect the couple, the court expressed clear dissatisfaction with the police's actions, condemning what it described as undue pressure and intimidation.

Justice Adnan Kareem Memon voiced his concern over the behaviour of the police, questioning their role in what appeared to be persistent harassment. He remarked sharply on the situation, suggesting that harassment seems to have become the police's primary function rather than upholding the law fairly and protecting citizens' rights.

The court's order specifically instructed law enforcement to cease troubling the young man and his family, signalling a protective stance toward individual freedom of choice in matters as personal as marriage. Notices have been issued to both the petitioners and the respondents, with a further hearing scheduled for 29 May to review the case.

This ruling sheds light on the ongoing tensions in some parts of society where personal decisions—especially regarding marriage—can become contested in ways that may invite unnecessary legal interference. The Sindh High Court's intervention reaffirms the judiciary's role in safeguarding fundamental rights against overreach by authorities.

### Sindh Minister pays tribute to armed forces

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Shahid Abdul Salam Thahim, Minister for Labour & Human Resources Department, Government of Sindh, paid rich tribute to the Pakistan armed forces on "Youm-e-Tashakur" (Day of Gratitude) to mark Pakistan's historic victory over Indian aggression during a special meeting called by the Governor of Sindh in the Sindh Assembly on Friday.

The meeting held in the Sindh Assembly is part of nationwide celebrations to commemorate Pakistan's remarkable achievement, where members of the Provincial Assembly paid tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces who fought bravely with valour and courage to defend the motherland and thwarted Indian forces during Operation Bunyanyum-Marsoos. Sindh Minister Shahid Abdul Salam Thahim expressed these thoughts outside the Sindh Assembly hall during media talks. He condemned Indian false propaganda and fake news against Pakistan. He said that the Labour Department will continue organising various events, such as seminars, workshops, and sports competitions among labourers to celebrate the victory.

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# Arab monarchs dance for survival

There is a quiet humiliation playing out across the Arab world—one that is not inflicted by foreign tanks or sanctions, but by the hands of its own rulers. The recent visit of Donald Trump, welcomed with extravagant fanfare in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, became a grim theatre of political surrender, wrapped in pomp and absurdity. What should have been an exercise in diplomatic engagement was instead a masterclass in submission, where ceremonial sword dances and billion-dollar contracts served only to underline how little remains of genuine sovereignty. The sword dance, performed in Trump's honor, was presented as a cherished tradition—a moment meant to symbolize pride and hospitality. But stripped of its ceremonial grandeur, it looked more like a desperate attempt to charm a guest whose track record on the Middle East reads like a catalogue of destruction.

One could hardly ignore the irony: a culture steeped in the rhetoric of Islamic solidarity was now dancing for a man who, not long ago, banned Muslims from entering his country and openly expressed disdain for Islamic civilization. Yet, there was no resistance—no quiet protest, not even a diplomatic cold shoulder. There was applause, applause for a man who has done more to divide and destabilize the Muslim world than to unify or uplift it. What these scenes exposed was the hollowness behind the claims of religious and cultural authenticity that many of these regimes often trumpet. The theatrics of Islamic symbolism—grand mosques, Quranic citations, and charity summits—cannot conceal the fact that Arab rulers are bartering their values for Western approval. This is not about securing national interests or building meaningful alliances; this is about clinging to power at any cost.

If American favor requires erasing memory, honor, and resistance, then so be it. Better to be a client state with lavish palaces than an independent nation with uncertain future. For decades, the Arab world has feared the fate of Iraq, Libya, and Syria—nations torn apart by war, often with Western fingerprints on every explosion. That fear has birthed a new logic: to survive, one must surrender in advance. Strategic partnerships have become insurance policies, and arms deals are less about defence than about tribute. It is a protection racket cloaked in diplomatic language. When rulers throw down \$200 billion in military purchases just to win a few hours of presidential attention, it becomes clear that the real currency is not cash—it is dignity. And that price, once paid, is rarely recovered.

Worse still, this submissiveness is not universal—it is selective. When a fellow Muslim nation asks for help, especially one struggling under occupation, sanctions, or natural disaster, the purse strings are tightly knotted. But when the time comes to demonstrate might, to flex muscles within the region, to showcase wealth and influence in front of Western eyes, the funds flow like rivers. There is an eagerness to impress the West that does not extend to supporting neighbors or Muslim brothers being massacred in Gaza. The Ummah—once imagined as a global body of mutual aid and solidarity—has become a slogan, not a structure. Its silence is not a matter of censorship; it is a matter of choice. A choice to ignore, to look away, to remain comfortable while others drown. And yet, there are signs that the script can be rewritten.

Pakistan, often dismissed in the Arab capitals as politically unstable or economically frail, showed a different face during its latest standoff with India. In moments of high tension, it stood its ground, asserting its sovereignty in the face of enormous pressure. It did not turn to Washington for permission. It did not beg for validation. Instead, it forced a recalibration of South Asian geopolitics, compelling even the most aloof Arab states to reconsider their growing romance with India—a country whose treatment of Muslims has reached alarming levels of cruelty. This is not to romanticize Pakistan's domestic troubles or to suggest that it holds all the answers. But its resilience offers an alternative vision—one where survival does not depend on subservience, and where cooperation is rooted in shared dignity rather than mutual fear.

For Arab states genuinely interested in defending their autonomy, there lies an opportunity: invest in the muscle of the Muslim world, not in the machinery of its subjugation. Supporting Pakistan's emerging defence sector would not only reduce dependency on the West but also foster a more balanced regional power dynamic. It could revive the possibility of Muslim self-reliance, both militarily and economically. But to take such a path requires political courage, a quality increasingly rare among today's Arab monarchs. Leaders like Mohammad bin Salman appear more interested in consolidating power through spectacle than through substance. His embrace of Washington, Tel Aviv, and New Delhi may appear pragmatic in the short term, but it comes with long-term consequences.

These relationships are not founded on equality but on utility—Saudi Arabia is useful only as long as it is compliant.

The moment it dares to dissent, it will find itself just as vulnerable as the others who once believed they were untouchable. And that is the danger of playing someone else's game: the rules are never written in your favor. When leaders exchange sovereignty for security guarantees, when they trade silence on Palestine for seats at international banquets, when they forget the blood-stained legacies of their benefactors, they gamble not only with their own futures but with the soul of the region. There is still a choice to be made.

The Muslim world can continue on its current trajectory—fragmented, frightened, and foreign-led—or it can begin the hard work of reclaiming its own narrative. That work will not be easy. It requires building trust where there has been betrayal, forging alliances beyond borders, and above all, restoring dignity where it has been lost. But the first step is always the hardest: to stop dancing for applause that comes at the cost of self-respect. Until then, every staged welcome, every sword raised in ceremonial submission, will serve as a reminder—not of tradition, but of how far the region has drifted from its own truth.

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

By Uzma Ehtasham



In a moment that laid bare the soul of a nation, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to the martyrs of what is now etched in the national psyche as the "Battle of Truth." Their remarks did not merely commemorate the fallen; they offered a resounding endorsement of Pakistan's military professionalism, national unity, and the enduring spirit of sacrifice. President Zardari rightly stated that the Pakistan Armed Forces, through Operation Bunyan al-Marsos, shattered the enemy's arrogance—an operation that was far more than a strategic response. It was an unequivocal message: Pakistan will never compromise its sovereignty. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif echoed this sentiment, calling the martyrs and their families the nation's true capital. He declared not only were our borders defended, but the enemy's nefarious ambitions were crushed. The deaths of over 40 innocent civilians, including women and children, serve as a grim reminder of India's war-mongering impulses. But this confrontation, this Battle of Truth, was never just a military engagement. It was a national assertion of dignity, defiance, and survival. India's provocation, marked by its habitual obstinacy and expansionist ambitions, triggered this aggression. But what New Delhi perhaps underestimated was the ferocity of Pakistan's response. The armed forces met that challenge head-on and turned it on its head. For those who imagined Pakistan as distracted or diminished, the outcome was a sobering lesson. The myth of India's numerical military superiority was shattered in real time—an outcome that stunned not just South Asia, but military observers worldwide. Where India sought to provoke, Pakistan unified. Where it tried to humiliate, Pakistan responded with clarity and courage.

The message delivered was not ambiguous. Each act of aggression will be met with a swift, decisive answer—not out of vengeance, but as a necessary duty to defend the homeland. These sacrifices are not moments of temporary retaliation; they are part of a continuous, generational resolve born with the very creation of Pakistan. The nation salutes its martyrs—today, tomorrow, and for all time. Their sacrifice is not forgotten, nor will it ever be. Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's post-Pahalgam address attempted to mask defeat with jingoistic rhetoric and fabricated narratives. The attempt to reframe humiliation as heroism failed to convince even India's own observers. Pakistan's Foreign Office was unequivocal: India's language is steeped in hate, deceit, and false claims of victory. The world has seen Pakistan play a key role in the global fight against terrorism. It should not be so easily misled by Indian distortions.

By Asghar Ali Mubarak



It is not every day that a nation pauses, breathes deeply, and looks back not in mourning but in solemn gratitude. Today, Pakistan did just that. The country observed what has been marked as a national day of thanksgiving, a tribute to the historic military success in Operation Bunyan Marsos—a campaign officials say was a definitive counter to Indian aggression. But beyond the ceremonial salutes and flag hoisting, lies a story layered with pain, resilience, and an urgent call for reflection. Across mosques, from Islamabad's domes to village prayer rooms, the day began with the sound of the Quran and prayers for peace—a peace hard-won, yet still fragile. Gun salutes pierced the morning calm, and soldiers stood in silent homage to comrades who paid the ultimate price. Pakistan's narrative today was one of pride, but not without a heavy undercurrent of sacrifice.

The central event at the Pakistan Monument in Islamabad turned the nation's gaze back to the battlefield—not only to celebrate military might, but to reaffirm collective purpose. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, addressing the gathering, declared that Pakistan's victory had redefined its global stature. His words echoed through the air with conviction: "No great power can block our path." Yet one could sense that this was not just about retaliation; it was about identity—of a nation finding its footing after decades of strategic uncertainty. Shehbaz Sharif's tone oscillated between triumph and diplomacy. He paid homage to the families of the fallen, the soldiers in uniform, and the architects of the operation—most notably General Syed Asim Munir, whose leadership, we were told, turned the tide of the battle.

The Prime Minister did not shy away from reliving the horrors of aggression, recalling the tragic loss of civilians—including children—and painting the enemy's disregard for international norms with grave detail. He lauded the downing of Indian aircraft and the retaliatory strikes deep into enemy territory. Yet, even as these stories of military dominance unfolded, there was a noticeable emphasis on peace. The call for a ceasefire, reportedly initiated by India, was presented not merely as a strategic victory but a moral high ground. "What greater

By Atiq Raja



In a world constantly rattled by uncertainty—political unrest, economic volatility, environmental crises, and personal struggles that don't make the headlines—there's something refreshingly grounding in the phrase, "Everything is figureoutable." At first, it feels like one of those overused self-help clichés you might scroll past on social media. But take a closer look, and you'll find a philosophy with remarkable depth, human relevance, and practical power. Coined by the American entrepreneur and life coach Marie Forleo, the word itself rebels against linguistic norms. It's not found in any formal dictionary, yet somehow, it says exactly what needs to be said. "Figureoutable" defies rigid grammatical structures much like it urges us to defy the mental structures that bind us. That's the entire point—this isn't about semantics; it's about survival, progress, and personal agency.

It's a mindset, not a magic wand. But mindsets, when grounded in reality and shaped by purpose, can change everything. So what does "figureoutable" really mean? Simply put, it means that there's no problem too tangled, no situation too complicated,

that we cannot at least begin to unravel it. It does not deny difficulty. It doesn't sugar-coat the messiness of real life. Rather, it insists that we are never as helpless as we think. Where there is effort, curiosity, and determination, there is hope. And in this era of burnout and breakdowns, hope is as essential as oxygen. Too often, people give up not because the challenge is insurmountable, but because they convince themselves it is. Our brains, sophisticated as they are, can shut down when the unknown feels too big. A looming challenge can quickly morph into a perceived dead end. But a "figureoutable" approach invites us to keep the mind open.

It gives permission to try, to fail, to try again. And more importantly, it allows us to acknowledge confusion without sinking into it. If we can see even the tiniest path forward, we can move. Look at any story of human progress, and you'll find this principle tucked inside it. Think of Thomas Edison, whose thousands of failed attempts at inventing the light bulb didn't deter him. Each failure became part of the process of figuring it out. Or consider Stephen Hawking, who, even as he lost control over his body due to ALS, continued to shape how we understand the cosmos. His resilience was not rooted in denial of his reality but in the belief that there was still a way to communicate, contribute, and shine.

There is nothing flashy about the "figure-

outable" mindset. It does not promise instant success or perfection. In fact, it thrives in the imperfect. It's what a single mother draws on when she navigates childcare, bills, and a full-time job without collapsing under the weight. It's what a teenager relies on when learning a new language after migrating to a new country. It's the inner resourcefulness that gets us through grief, through failure, through days we don't know how to face. We figure it out, because we must. And more often than not, we do. But how do we nurture such a mindset when life feels overwhelming? It begins with language. How we talk to ourselves matters. The difference between "I can't" and "How can I?" is more than rhetorical. It is a psychological shift. The former ends the conversation.

The latter begins it. That shift alone can reignite problem-solving parts of the brain and, slowly but surely, reframe the problem into something more manageable. Breaking problems into smaller pieces also helps. Big challenges rarely come with big, singular solutions. But they often yield to small, persistent efforts. A daunting financial situation might not be resolved overnight, but budgeting, asking for advice, seeking support, and staying informed can be meaningful steps. There's no shame in seeking help—figuring things out is not a solo sport. In fact, knowing when to lean on others is a sign of wisdom, not weakness. Resilience plays its

part too. Setbacks are not the enemy of this mindset—they are its teachers. In embracing the idea that not every solution works the first time, we let go of the illusion of ease.

What we embrace instead is grit, growth, and adaptability. Learning becomes the toolkit with which we approach each new hurdle. The more we learn, the better we get at figuring things out. There's also a quiet beauty in applying this philosophy to the mundane. Life isn't always about heroic acts or dramatic transformations. Sometimes it's about learning how to fix the kitchen tap, how to listen better in a relationship, how to cook something edible with limited ingredients. These everyday moments, stitched together, form the fabric of resilience. And in that fabric lies the subtle but powerful message: you are capable. In our collective age of fatigue and disillusionment, the phrase "Everything is figureoutable" doesn't deny suffering or gloss over real limitations. What it does remind us that the human spirit, when given just enough room, tends to rise. It says that we're not alone in our confusion, and that within each of us, there's an untapped capacity to navigate, to learn, to solve.

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# 'Thanksgiving Day' for glorious victory

ident Donald Trump—a surprising reappearance on the regional stage. His role in diffusing what might have spiraled into a nuclear confrontation was acknowledged, raising the specter of devastation that both countries narrowly avoided. Yet, even in victory, the tone was cautiously optimistic.

"We won the war," Sharif repeated, "but we want peace." These words should not be dismissed as mere rhetoric. In a region too often hijacked by hyper-nationalism and historical grievances, to articulate a desire for peace is to take a stand—one that requires consistent, courageous diplomacy. Today, Pakistan stood tall—but the weight of history demands more than just posture. It demands purpose.

The memorials of martyrs are not mere symbols of past glory; they are reminders of what remains unfinished. The road ahead—toward peace, prosperity, and genuine regional cooperation—is fraught with challenges. But if this moment is treated not as an endpoint, but as a turning point, then perhaps, today's celebrations will mark not only the end of a battle, but the beginning of a new national chapter.

**The writer is a senior journalist covering various beats, can be reached at news@metro-morning.com**

honor," Sharif asked, "than compelling the aggressor to seek peace?" The editorial lens, however, must look beyond patriotic celebration.

While the government rightly honors the bravery of its soldiers and the unity of its people, it is also incumbent upon the nation's leadership to resist the allure of triumphalism. War, even when justified, leaves behind ruins. The real victory lies not in destruction, but in what follows: the healing, the rebuilding, and the transformation of political resolve into economic progress. Shehbaz Sharif's speech touched on this future—a vision of economic resurgence, self-reliance, and technological advancement. He celebrated indigenous innovation, particularly the integration of local tech with Chinese military hardware, which he claimed had surprised the world.

And he did not miss the opportunity to call out India's aspirations of regional hegemony, only to assert that "Allah had other plans." But the editorial question remains: will this political moment translate into actual reforms, into institutions that work, into policies that uplift the poorest and educate the next generation? In the international arena, the Prime Minister's gratitude extended to allies and diplomats, most notably US Pres-

ident Donald Trump—a surprising reappearance on the regional stage. His role in diffusing what might have spiraled into a nuclear confrontation was acknowledged, raising the specter of devastation that both countries narrowly avoided. Yet, even in victory, the tone was cautiously optimistic.

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# Everything is figureoutable

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Section 3 lacks proper legal reference to changes in the Rules of Business, and Section 2(h)'s definition of "department" is unclear—raising questions about whether a new or existing body will administer the law.

As per Schedule XI, the new bill's non-applicability to the merged districts until 2030 and the vague definition of "local community" raise concerns. When read alongside provisions on "rare earth minerals", "public organisations", and "strategic minerals", as well as the concessions granted under these sections, it fuels suspicions of resource exploitation without adequate local or provincial benefit.

This is not to suggest there's no need for legal reform. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines and Minerals Act 2017 was a robust and well-researched law. I can attest to this, having been a member of the provincial assembly that passed it, and part of the party whose minister introduced it. In 2019, as provincial law minister, I oversaw substantial amendments to the Act, which strengthened it further and attracted no controversy.

# The federal grip on the KP Mining Bill

By Sultan Muhammad Khan

As a student, I was fascinated by Allan Quatermain, the adventurous hero of 'King Solomon's Mines' (1885) by Sir H Rider Haggard, which brought the legendary Biblical mines to life. These mines, said to have brought great wealth to King Solomon (970–931 BC), remain undiscovered. Their supposed ownership caused conflict between the Israelites and the Edomites, who were believed to be the original owners.

In 54 BC, Julius Caesar attempted to invade Britain, partly because it was known as a source of tin. Though largely unsuccessful, his ambition was revived 89 years later by Emperor Claudius, who launched another invasion for Britain's rich metal deposits—tin, lead and silver. The conquest was completed in AD 87 under Emperor Domitian, incorporating Britain into the Roman Empire.

The Romans nationalised mining, prohibiting private ownership. They had codified mining laws, including Lex Metallis Dicta and Lex Metallii Vespascensis, which governed resource extraction. Lead was considered a strategic resource. Only in AD 60 was limited private mining allowed in Roman Britain—a rare shift from state monopoly to partial privatisation of vital mineral resources.

The pages of history are filled with countless examples of conflicts and disagreements over mineral wealth. These could be ownership squabbles between provincial and central governments. Or they could be debates about the precedence of local populations' welfare over the state's commercial profits and revenue. These disagreements could also concern the extent of private and government control and the categorisation of mines and minerals into assets for the exclusive use of the state.

The conflict over laws, ownership and rights continues even today. So, what is it about the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines and Minerals Bill 2025 that is cause for concern? As the saying goes, "the devil lies in the details".

The foremost objection to the new bill is that it goes against the spirit and letter of the 18th Amendment. Critics argue that provincial turf would be encroached upon by the federal government. The main concern here is the inclusion of the 'Federal Mineral Wing' in a number of decision-making forums and sections of the law. Section 10(7), makes the "instructions" of the Federal Mining Wing mandatory. Section 19(2)(f) of the proposed bill makes the director general of the Federal Mineral Wing a permanent member of the Minerals Investment Facilitation Authority (MIFA), which is the apex provincial authority in the scheme of powers envisaged under the new bill. Section 19(3) allows for any co-opted member to be taken on board

by MIFA—and this in my view would have been sufficient for taking any expert opinion by MIFA.

Section 20 of the bill makes it mandatory for the provinces to conform to a uniform framework and its subsections uses the word 'shall', thus making it mandatory in law to take directions from the Federal Mineral Wing. Section 65(c) restricts and binds the provincial authority by making it obligatory to execute agreements as per "suggestions" of the Federal Mining Wing. MIFA, which under Section 19 would be revamped under the new bill and include at least five provincial ministers would be practically taking directions from a grade-19 officer of the Federal Mining Wing. This federal interference and encroachment is schematic throughout the bill, the above examples illustrating the general pattern.

Section 46(2)(d)(i) & (ii) of the bill mandates a financial guarantee of Rs500 million for large-scale mining and Rs25 million for small-scale mining. Local investors argue this effectively excludes them from participating in mining within their own regions. Their concerns are reinforced by Section 46(4)(a) & (b), which imposes stringent experience requirements and restricts a company to only one licence at a time—potentially sidelining local businesses.

A key objection is that this bill was imposed on provincial governments without consultation. Critics say it is a one-size-fits-

all draft being rushed through, as seen in Balochistan. The haste is reflected in legal flaws: Section 76(2) uses "remediated" instead of "remedied"; Section 64(3) vaguely states fines will be recovered as "debt due to government" without specifying a method; and Section 58(4)(a) oddly defines a controlling interest as less than 51 per cent.

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## Trump warns Iran to act swiftly on US nuclear proposal

Trump warned that delays in action risk “very bad consequences,” signalling a hardening stance as tensions escalate over Iran’s uranium enrichment and regional ambitions

### News Desk

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has delivered a stark warning to Iran, urging the country to act quickly on what he described as an American proposal concerning its nuclear program.

Speaking from Washington, Trump cautioned that failure to respond swiftly could lead to “very bad consequences,” signalling a toughening stance amid rising tensions over Iran’s uranium enrichment activities and its broader regional influence. His statement, while brief and lacking specific details about the proposal, seemed intended to ratchet up pressure on Tehran to engage seriously and promptly. “Iran has our nuclear proposal. What matters now is that they know they must move quickly—or something



very bad could happen,” President Trump said, underscoring the urgency he believes is needed.

The response from Iran was immediate and unequivocal. Abbas Araghchi, Iran’s Foreign Minister, firmly denied that Tehran had received any such proposal from the United States. Speaking in Tehran, Araghchi stressed, “We have not received any American proposal,” while reaffirming Iran’s commitment to its nuclear programme.



He highlighted that Iran’s right to enrich uranium was earned “through hard work,” and is a sovereign entitlement under international agreements.

Araghchi emphasised that while Iran remains open to dialogue, it insists such negotiations must be “built on mutual respect, not dictated ultimatums.”

He rejected any approach perceived as coercive or one-sided, signalling Tehran’s unwillingness to

yield under pressure without equitable treatment.

This latest exchange exposes the widening divide between Washington’s increasingly hardline rhetoric and Tehran’s steadfast defence of its nuclear ambitions. While Trump’s warning suggests growing impatience and a willingness to escalate consequences, Iranian officials remain firm, maintaining their current course unless negotiations are conducted on terms they consider respectful and just.

As diplomatic stalemate persists, the risk of miscalculation or confrontation looms, with both sides navigating a precarious balance between assertiveness and the need for dialogue. The international community watches closely, aware that any misstep could have profound regional and global repercussions.

## Ukraine, Russia finish latest talks in Istanbul

### News Desk

ISTANBUL: A round of direct peace talks between Ukrainian and Russian delegations has concluded in Istanbul, offering a cautiously hopeful sign amid the ongoing conflict that has gripped the region. According to official sources from the Turkish Foreign Ministry, the discussions lasted nearly two hours and were marked by a significant level of diplomatic engagement.

The meeting saw the involvement of Turkey’s Foreign Minister as well as the head of the country’s intelligence agency, underlining the gravity and importance of the talks.



Ankara places on facilitating dialogue between Kyiv and Moscow. This high-level participation also reflects Turkey’s growing role as a mediator in one of the most consequential conflicts of recent years.

Though details of the talks remain closely guarded, the mere continuation of direct communication between the two sides signals a mutual recognition of the need for negotiation, even as hostilities persist. These discussions represent another step in a broader international effort to find a diplomatic resolution that could bring relief to millions affected by the war.

Observers will be watching closely to see whether this round of talks leads to concrete agreements or paves the way for further negotiations. The path to peace remains fraught with challenges, but the Istanbul meeting underscores the fragile yet vital pursuit of dialogue amid conflict.

## ICC’s Jay Shah under fire for ‘double standards’

### News Desk

DUBAI: Jay Shah, the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), is facing a growing backlash after publicly expressing support for Indian soldiers during a period of heightened tensions with Pakistan. Critics, including prominent Australian journalist Malcolm Conn, have accused Shah of hypocrisy and politicizing the game.

The controversy erupted after Shah’s message in favor of the Indian army drew attention, with many pointing out the contrast between his actions and how the ICC has handled similar gestures from players.

Malcolm Conn, writing on social media, questioned how the ICC had suspended Australian cricketer Usman Khawaja for displaying a dove – a universal symbol of peace – on his bat, yet allowed its own chairman to openly take a political stance. Conn highlighted that Shah is the son of India’s Home Minister, suggesting his position is not only political by nature but now actively being used to shape the ICC’s public posture. “When an Australian Muslim player wore a symbol of peace, he was banned.

Now the ICC chairman is openly supporting one side during rising tensions, and that’s somehow acceptable?” Conn wrote, calling it a “staggering double standard”.

## Rajnath Singh urges IMF to rethink \$1bn loan to Pakistan

Singh sparks outrage with provocative claim that economic aid to Pakistan is tantamount to financing terror, fuelling fresh diplomatic tensions

### News Desk

New Delhi: India’s Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has launched a sharp rebuke of Pakistan’s financial support from the International Monetary Fund, suggesting the recently approved \$1 billion tranche could end up bankrolling terrorism. Speaking to Indian Air Force personnel at a base in western India, Singh expressed alarm that international financial institutions might inadvertently be fuelling militant activities in the region under the guise of economic assistance.

Singh did not hold back in his remarks, stating, “I firmly believe that any economic aid to Pakistan amounts to support for terrorism.” His comments appear to be a direct response to the IMF’s latest decision to clear a critical review of Pakistan’s ongoing financial programme, which unlocked a fresh \$1 billion disbursement. The funds were confirmed last week by Pakistan’s State Bank, despite a wave of Indian opposition in diplomatic and strategic circles.

Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry reacted swiftly and forcefully, brushing off Singh’s accusation as a sign of what it described as India’s “frustration and failure.” Islamabad insisted that its cooperation with the IMF remains transparent and focused on stabilising the country’s fragile economy. Officials underscored that the approval came after a rigorous assessment process, one that India’s complaints had failed to derail.

In a further development that could deepen tensions, Pakistan has also received the green light for an additional \$140 million from the IMF, earmarked under its Climate Resilience Fund – a move aimed at bolstering the country’s ability to cope with mounting environmental challenges. The dual injections of support are seen as crucial lifelines for a government still grappling with



inflation, energy shortages, and recovery from last year’s devastating floods. India, which shares representation at the IMF board with Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, has long tried to leverage its regional influence within global institutions. Singh’s remarks reflect New Delhi’s unease with the current direction of financial diplomacy, particularly when it comes to Pakistan.

While the IMF has not issued a response to Singh’s statement, the broader context of Indo-Pakistani relations looms large over the exchange. For decades, the two nuclear-armed neighbours have accused each other of sponsoring unrest across their shared borders, with Kashmir often the flashpoint for both military and political confrontations.

## UN slams Indian Navy over throwing Rohingya Muslims into sea

### News Desk

NEW YORK: The United Nations has issued a strong condemnation following reports that the Indian Navy forcibly expelled Rohingya refugees into the Andaman Sea, describing the actions as inhuman, unacceptable, and a clear violation of international law. The UN Human Rights Commission expressed grave concern over the incident, highlighting the severity of these alleged abuses.

International media outlets have reported that UN human rights experts based in Geneva have initiated a formal investigation into the matter. The UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar voiced deep alarm, calling the notion of refugees being pushed off naval vessels into open waters “horrifying.” This stark language under-



scores the gravity with which the global community views such actions.

The Special Rapporteur called on the Indian government to undertake a thorough and transparent investigation, demanding a clear explanation of the events. There was a firm appeal for an immediate halt to such inhumane practices, with an emphasis that these acts represent serious breaches of United Nations law and fundamental human rights principles.

## Pindi court sentences rapist to death

### News Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi District Court has handed down a death sentence to a man convicted of rape, delivering a verdict that underscores the judiciary’s firm stance against sexual violence.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Afshan Ijaz Sofi announced the ruling, which not only imposes the ultimate penalty but also includes financial penalties aimed at delivering justice to the victim. Alongside the capital punishment, the court ordered the convict to pay a fine of 200,000 rupees and compensation amounting to 500,000 rupees under the Anti-Rape Act. This financial reparation is intended to support the victim in the aftermath of the traumatic incident. The court also made it clear that failure to comply with these payments would lead to an additional six months of imprisonment, reinforcing the seriousness with which the legal system treats such cases.

## Fin Min calls for structural reforms to end IMF dependence

Aurangzeb stressed to business leaders that “policy consistency is crucial,” unveiling plans for an advisory panel aimed at stabilizing and guiding Pakistan’s fragile economic landscape

### By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Federal Finance Minister, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, has underscored the critical need for structural reforms if the country is to break free from its persistent reliance on International Monetary Fund (IMF) programs. Speaking at a meeting with a delegation from the US Business Council in Islamabad, Aurangzeb emphasized that while capital investment often takes center stage in economic discussions, Pakistan’s immediate priority lies in acquiring the necessary skills and expertise to implement meaningful reforms.

“Policy consistency is crucial,” Aurangzeb told business leaders, outlining government plans to establish an advisory panel designed to guide and stabilize economic decision-making. He highlighted efforts towards the full digitalization of Pakistan’s economy, stating that there is “no room for leakage in the value chain.” As part of this vision, experts are being recruited to strengthen the IT wing of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), which will play a central role in modernizing tax collection and improving transparency.



The meeting also provided an opportunity for the finance minister to discuss forthcoming budget proposals and address concerns raised by the business community. Aurangzeb reaffirmed the government’s commitment to a fair taxation regime across all sectors and updated attendees on recent engagements with the IMF and World Bank in Washington. He stressed the importance of broadening Pakistan’s tax base and ensuring an equitable distribution of the tax burden, highlighting these as vital steps for sustainable economic progress.

Reflecting a shared interest in long-term collaboration, the US Business Council recommended maintaining a continuous dialogue with Pakistani officials throughout the year rather than limiting consulta-

tions to the budget season. Both parties agreed that enhanced economic cooperation and closer bilateral ties would be essential to Pakistan’s development ambitions. Senator Aurangzeb’s remarks come amid ongoing economic challenges in Pakistan, where repeated IMF programs have provided short-term relief but failed to resolve deeper structural issues.

His focus on policy consistency, digital transformation, and fair taxation reflects a recognition that without fundamental changes, the cycle of dependence on external financial support is unlikely to end. For Pakistan’s economy to gain resilience and self-sufficiency, the minister suggested, it must invest not only in funds but also in the skills and systems necessary to execute reform effectively.

## UK’s Lammy notes no evidence from India on Pahalgam allegations

### By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: British Foreign Secretary David Lammy has described the ceasefire between Pakistan and India as a fragile and sensitive issue, underscoring the absence of any evidence from India to substantiate its allegations against Pakistan. Lammy acknowledged the complexities surrounding national security matters, noting that he did not expect India to disclose such details to him.

Despite these challenges, Lammy emphasized that international partners are united in their efforts to uphold the ceasefire and reduce tensions in the region. He also addressed the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, expressing his condolences to the victims and reiterating the UK’s firm condemnation of all forms of terrorism.

He drew attention to the



fact that Pakistan has endured significant terrorist violence itself and highlighted the shared responsibility of both countries to combat extremism and prevent its further spread.

The British foreign secretary praised the leadership shown by Pakistan and India in fostering a constructive dialogue during the ceasefire process, describing their cooperation as essential for regional stability.

His visit marks the first by a British foreign secretary to Pakistan in four years, sig-

nalling a renewed focus on strengthening bilateral relations. Lammy indicated that his agenda would prioritize enhancing ties in areas such as cultural exchange and trade, aiming to build a more resilient partnership between the two nations.

Acknowledging the broader impact of the conflict, Lammy pointed out that tensions between Pakistan and India reverberate far beyond their borders, directly affecting communities from both countries living in the UK.

## PM condemns unprovoked aggression amid rising tensions

### By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy in Islamabad on Saturday, in a significant show of diplomatic engagement aimed at reinforcing Pakistan’s dedication to sustaining the recent ceasefire and fostering stability across South Asia.

During their discussions, Prime Minister Sharif articulated Pakistan’s firm yet restrained approach amid escalating tensions with India. Describing recent accusations against Pakistan as “baseless” and condemning what he termed “unprovoked aggression,” Sharif emphasised that Pakistan’s responses have been “calibrated and aimed solely at proportionate targets.”

His remarks underscored Pakistan’s assertion of its sovereign right to self-defence, while affirming adherence to international law and norms. The high-level meeting brought together senior officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, reflecting the importance both countries attach to the dialogue.

Sharif further stressed Pakistan’s steadfast commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity without compromising the pursuit of regional peace. He took the opportunity to thank the UK for its ongoing diplomatic support and extended



warm regards to King Charles and Prime Minister Keir Starmer, highlighting the historical and enduring ties binding the two nations. Foreign Secretary Lammy, who was visiting Pakistan officially for the first time since taking office, welcomed the progress made in recent ceasefire negotiations. He congratulated Prime Minister Sharif on Pakistan’s role in helping de-escalate hostilities and acknowledged the critical importance of continued cooperation and dialogue between Islamabad and London.

## PM invited to Pope Leo XVI’s inauguration ceremony

### By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has been invited to attend the inauguration ceremony of Pope Leo XVI, a significant event in the global Catholic community. While the prime minister himself will not be making the journey, the Government of Pakistan will be represented by Minister of State for Religious Affairs Khail Das Kohistani and Punjab’s Minister for Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora, who are scheduled to depart for Rome today.

Sources in Islamabad confirmed that both ministers will attend the ceremony on behalf of Pakistan, highlighting the country’s commitment to engaging with the international religious community and promoting interfaith dialogue. The invitation and the subsequent participation of these senior officials under-

score Pakistan’s efforts to foster goodwill and strengthen diplomatic ties with the Vatican.

The presence of Khail Das Kohistani and Ramesh Singh Arora at such a high-profile event reflects Pakistan’s recognition of the importance of minority affairs and religious harmony, particularly at a time when global religious leaders play a pivotal role in peacebuilding and cross-cultural understanding.

## ‘No comments on reports of Afghan defence minister’s secret India trip’

### By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: The spokesperson of Pakistan’s Foreign Office, Shafqat Ali Khan, has refrained from commenting on reports of the Afghan defence minister’s alleged secret visit to India. He emphasized that Pakistan expects friendly countries not to use their relations against it.

Speaking to the media, Shafqat Ali Khan said that Pakistan does not comment on other countries’ bilateral ties, recognizing every state’s sovereign right to pursue its own foreign policy. He acknowledged India and Afghanistan as independent nations.

The spokesperson highlighted Pakistan’s firm response to Indian aggres-



sion, citing Operation Bunyan Mursos, where Pakistan’s armed forces downed six enemy warplanes, affirming the country’s resolve to protect its honor and dignity.

He appreciated the role of friendly countries in facilitating the ceasefire, noting that efforts from multiple partners helped achieve the truce. However, he warned that any future ag-

gression would be met with a strong response. Pakistan remains fully aware of security threats and is prepared to meet any challenges, with its armed forces alert and ready.

Shafqat Ali Khan reiterated Pakistan’s commitment to peaceful conflict resolution and stressed that the country does not shy away from discussing terrorism, having suffered from it extensively.

He accused India of involvement in promoting terrorism within Pakistan and plotting assassinations not only on Pakistani soil but also abroad, stating that Pakistan possesses solid evidence of India’s role. He said discussions about the venue for peace talks are premature at this stage.