

PM dispatches diplomatic team to counter Indian propaganda

As tensions quietly smoulder across South Asia, Islamabad lashes out against what it claims is a calculated Indian campaign to tarnish Pakistan's global standing

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has ordered the formation of a high-powered diplomatic mission aimed at confronting what Pakistan sees as a sustained disinformation campaign by India and reaffirming Islamabad's commitment to regional peace. The Prime Minister's Office on Saturday released a statement confirming the development and revealed that Shehbaz personally reached out to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, asking him to head the delegation.

The move comes at a time when tensions in South Asia are once again simmering beneath the surface, with Islamabad increasingly vocal about what it calls India's attempts to malign Pakistan's international image. The delegation, described as both political and



diplomatic in character, features some of Pakistan's most seasoned voices in foreign affairs and governance, including Dr Musadik Malik, Khurram Dastgir, Sherry Rehman, Hina Rabbani Khar, Faisal Subzwari, Tehmina Janjua, and Jalil Abbas Jilani.

Their itinerary is as ambitious as their mission. London, Washington, Paris, and Brussels are among the key capitals the team will visit in the coming weeks, as Islamabad looks to mount a coor-

ordinated effort to push back against narratives it says are aimed at isolating Pakistan on the world stage. Officials close to the development say the prime minister is keen to reassert Pakistan's place in the global diplomatic conversation, particularly at a time when competing interests in the region have begun to harden international attitudes.

The delegation's primary objective, according to the official communique, is to expose India's "disinforma-

tion campaigns and destabilizing strategies" across South Asia. But alongside that, they will also be tasked with explaining Pakistan's diplomatic and peace-oriented posture, a strategy that Islamabad hopes will resonate in Western capitals traditionally seen as wary yet watchful observers of subcontinental rivalries.

By choosing Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to spearhead this mission, Shehbaz Sharif appears to be reaching across political lines while banking on Bhutto's recent experience as foreign minister and his growing profile on the global stage.

The inclusion of other high-profile names suggests the government wants to present a united front, both politically and diplomatically, as it prepares to engage in what could be a critical round of global perception-building.

UN chief slams Israel's brutal siege on Gaza

News Desk

GAZA: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has issued a grave warning over what he described as Israel's escalating and brutal attacks on Gaza, calling the plight of Palestinians trapped under siege "unimaginable and inhumane." In a strongly worded statement, Guterres slammed Israel's blockade and starvation policy, denouncing it as a direct affront to international law and a stain on the conscience of the global community.

As the humanitarian crisis deepens with each passing hour, the UN chief demanded the immediate lifting of the aid blockade, urging world powers to uphold their obligations to protect civilians and ensure access to life-saving supplies. He said the suffering of Palestinians



could no longer be brushed aside under political pretexts or security narratives, asserting that depriving people of food, water, and medicine is not a military strategy but a crime against humanity.

Guterres also raised alarm over Israel's growing intensity of military operations, which he said have resulted in devastating consequences for civilians, particularly women and children. He reiterated that the United Nations remains fully committed to the principles of international humanitarian law, impartiality, and the protection of human dignity.

He reaffirmed the UN's unwavering support for the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Gaza, praising its frontline role in delivering aid amid danger. Amid increasing reports of repeated forced displacements and evictions, the Secretary-General strongly opposed such actions, stating that mass expulsions cannot be justified under any circumstance.

Lahore court to charge 'Jinnah House' attackers

By Faizan Khan

LAHORE: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore has scheduled 24 May for the formal framing of charges against the accused in the high-profile Jinnah House attack case. The hearing took place inside Kot Lakhpat Jail, where the judge distributed copies of the charge sheet to all 267 defendants named in the case.

During the proceedings, the court recorded the attendance of detained suspects, including prominent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Dr Yasmin Rashid. Other accused, such as Alia Hamza and Khadija Shah, appeared in person for the trial, underscoring the magnitude and complexity of the case.

German paper calls India's Rafale loss, warning to West

Pakistan's resilient defence, bolstered by China's J-10C fighter jets, played a pivotal role in thwarting India's covert Operation Sandor, underscoring shifting power dynamics in the region

News Desk

BERLIN: A German newspaper has published a striking analysis of the recent aerial confrontation between India and Pakistan, framing the destruction of an Indian Rafale fighter jet as a powerful lesson for Western defence forces. The article, titled "Destruction of Rafale in Indian attack on Pakistan is a lesson for the West," credits Pakistan's use of the Chinese-made Chengdu J-10C multirole fighter — dubbed the "Mighty Dragon" — for shooting down the French-built Rafale.

The newspaper termed the India's Operation Sandor was a costly failure for New Delhi. According to the piece, Indian pilots, buoyed by overconfidence in their technological edge, gravely misjudged Pakistan's air defence capabilities and the effectiveness of its J-10C fighters and surface-to-air missile systems.

The article details how Pakistan had carefully prepared a robust and multilayered defence strategy against the Indian incursion.

While some Indian jets managed to breach Pak-



istan's airspace, they were met with fierce resistance from Pakistani aviators, turning the engagement into an intense aerial battle. The report highlights that India also underestimated the level of intelligence sharing between Pakistan and China, which proved decisive in countering the Indian offensive.

The Indian Air Force's decision to assign its Rafale jets the dual role of intercepting incoming air-to-air missiles and conducting ground strikes with cruise missiles is described as an "operational error," one that ultimately contributed to the Rafale's destruction. Beyond recounting the tactical details, the newspaper warns that this incident should serve as a

cautionary signal to European defence planners.

With Russia increasingly integrating advanced Chinese technology into its military systems, the article argues, European countries must urgently reassess whether their own air defence networks can effectively counter the evolving aerial capabilities emerging from the Sino-Russian axis. The analysis underscores the shifting dynamics in aerial warfare and the growing complexity of modern air defence, suggesting that traditional assumptions about Western technological dominance may no longer hold true in an era of rapid military innovation and strategic realignment.

CJLHC orders full enforcement of 'Judicial Policy'

News Desk

LAHORE: In a decisive move to accelerate the wheels of justice, Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, Justice Aalia Neelum, has ordered the implementation of the judicial policy in its true spirit across Punjab. The directive signals a renewed urgency from the province's top judge to tackle court delays and restore public trust in the judicial system.

Acting swiftly on her instructions, the Director General of District Judiciary issued a formal memorandum to all session judges, laying down specific timelines for the disposal of key categories of cases. The memo underlines that all applications for stay orders must be resolved within 15 days—a sharp shift from the often lengthy and ambiguous timelines that have long frustrated litigants. It also stipulates that civil appeals pending for more than three months must now be concluded within a month.

The move has been welcomed by legal observers as a much-needed push to clear the backlog that has plagued lower courts and eroded confidence in timely justice. The judiciary's delays, especially in civil matters, have been a longstanding concern for the public and legal community alike. By enforcing fixed deadlines, Justice Neelum appears determined to dismantle a culture of adjournments and procedural stagnation.

23 dead as nature hits parts of US

News Desk

KENTUCKY: At least 23 people have died and many others have been injured after powerful storms and tornadoes swept across parts of the United States, causing severe destruction in several states, particularly Kentucky and Missouri.

According to international news agencies, tornadoes and violent weather systems tore through communities, uprooting trees, ripping roofs off houses and reducing wooden structures to piles of debris. More than 300,000 residents have been left without power due to downed lines and widespread infrastructure damage.

Media reports indicate dozens of vehicles were also damaged or overturned by the storm. Authorities are continuing rescue and recovery operations, while weather agencies have warned of the possibility of further extreme weather in the coming days.

Chinese planes drop aid over Gaza, defying Israeli blockade

In Gaza's streets, children chanted support for China, their eyes lifted skywards as parachutes delivered vital aid amidst the ongoing crisis

News Desk

GAZA: In a bold and unexpected move, Chinese aircraft entered Gaza's airspace and dropped food and essential supplies to besieged Palestinians, breaking through Israel's longstanding blockade. A video widely shared on social media shows Chinese cargo planes, flanked by Chinese fighter jets, flying over the enclave and parachuting aid packages into areas desperate for relief.

Eyewitness footage captures a dramatic moment as Chinese fighter jets pierced the blockade, escorting the aid-laden aircraft into the Gaza Strip. The operation was not just a humanitarian gesture but also appeared to send a powerful message—that military dominance does not belong to the United States or Israel alone. The reaction on the ground was one of visible joy.

In the streets of Gaza, children could be seen chanting slogans in support of China, waving and pointing skywards as parachutes



floated down with lifesaving supplies. The move comes amid a backdrop of shifting Middle Eastern alliances. Despite the ongoing Israeli assault on Palestinians, Saudi Arabia continues to engage in backchannel talks with Israel under American influence.

Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar maintain increasingly close ties with Tel Aviv, leaving many in the region feeling betrayed and isolated. China's intervention marks a rare instance of direct involvement in the Gaza crisis, one that challenges the current power balance and resonates strongly with Palestinians who feel abandoned by traditional Arab allies.

"We call on the international community to pool all efforts and take urgent actions to bring an end to the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza," said Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, at the UN Security Council Briefing on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, on Tuesday, according to the Permanent Mission of China to the UN.

No aid has entered Gaza for more than 10 weeks and every single one of the 2.1 million people there faces famine conditions, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher said on Tuesday in a briefing to the UN Security Council in New York, according to the UN.

Modi orders acceleration of new projects to reduce river flows

News Desk

NEW DEHLI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reportedly instructed officials to accelerate planning for new infrastructure projects aimed at curbing water flow from the Chenab, Jhelum, and Indus rivers.

A British news agency has revealed details of one such project, the proposed doubling in length of the Ranbir Canal on the Chenab River — a development not previously made public. The Ranbir Canal, currently about 60 kilometers long, is planned to be extended to approximately 120 kilometers. Experts estimate this expansion could significantly increase water diversion, from the present 40 cubic meters per second to as much as 150 cubic meters per second.

While the potential impact of such a project is considerable, the extension is expected to take several



years before completion. Sources say discussions on the Ranbir Canal expansion began just last month and have persisted despite the recent ceasefire between India and Pakistan, signaling that water management remains a sensitive and strategic issue in the region.

The increased diversion of water from rivers crucial to Pakistan's agriculture and hydropower sectors could escalate tensions between the two neighbors, who have long been embroiled in disputes over water sharing. Efforts to obtain comments

from the Indian Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of External Affairs, and the relevant hydropower company were unsuccessful, with all declining to respond on the matter.

This development raises fresh concerns over the future of the Indus Waters Treaty and the fragile water-sharing arrangements between India and Pakistan, especially as both countries face increasing water scarcity and growing demands on their river systems.

Pakistan, Russia discuss to boost bilateral ties in Kazan

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Minister for Privatization, Abdul Aleem Khan, held a significant meeting with Russian Federation Deputy Prime Minister Murat Khusnullin on the sidelines of the Kazan Forum, signaling Islamabad's intent to deepen ties with Moscow across a broad spectrum of sectors. The discussions marked a step forward in what both sides described as a shared ambition to strengthen developmental partnerships and enhance cooperation.

During their talks, Aleem Khan highlighted Pakistan's eagerness to explore new avenues for collaboration with Russia, underlining the coun-



try's commitment to building sustainable and mutually beneficial ties. The minister emphasized that Pakistan views Russia not only as an important regional player but also as a strategic partner capable of contributing to the country's growth and economic progress.

ideal platform for dialogue and cooperation, one that could pave the way for more concrete agreements and joint initiatives in the near future.

This meeting reflects the ongoing efforts by Pakistan to diversify its international partnerships and build stronger economic links beyond its traditional alliances.

As the global geopolitical landscape shifts, Islamabad's outreach to Moscow signals a desire to balance relationships and tap into new opportunities for growth and regional stability.

Both sides appeared optimistic that their engagement at Kazan could serve as a foundation for deeper ties in the coming years.

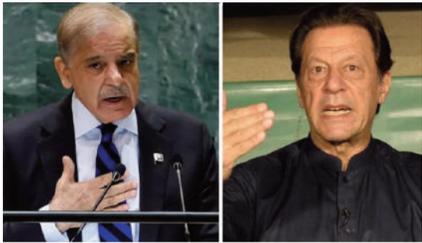
Video appearance by PM in Rs10bn defamation suit targets Imran

PM Shehbaz Sharif argued that Imran Khan's legal team was prematurely delving into arguments best left for the final phase, not mid-examination disruptions

News Desk

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Friday resumed proceedings in the high-profile Rs10 billion defamation suit filed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan. The case, which has lingered for years, witnessed a rare virtual appearance by Shahbaz Sharif himself, as the courtroom briefly turned into a stage for sharp legal exchanges and procedural tussles.

Appearing via video link, the prime minister faced direct questions from Imran Khan's legal team. One particular moment drew attention when Khan's lawyer



asked Shahbaz whether he had the case documents with him during the testimony. Shahbaz candidly admitted that he did not. In response, he requested the court for a short break, informing the judge that his legal team was in the process of sending him the relevant documents via WhatsApp.

The court allowed a recess to facilitate the request. Upon resumption, Shahbaz's counsel stepped in with a pointed intervention. He argued that the line of questioning being pursued by Imran Khan's legal team should be reserved for final arguments rather than introduced mid-examination. He reminded the court of civil

procedure rules, underlining that once the defendant's opportunity to present their case concludes, the reply to the original claim is also deemed final—implying that no fresh defence arguments should be introduced through cross-examination.

While Imran Khan himself remains incarcerated in Adiala Jail, his legal team has been actively contesting the claim, which stems from remarks made by Khan in 2017. At the time, the former prime minister accused Shahbaz Sharif of offering Rs10 billion to silence him in the Panama Papers case—a charge that Shahbaz has categorically denied, terming it baseless and defamatory. The court adjourned the case until May 24, when

Shahbaz is expected to continue facing cross-examination. Though largely procedural, Friday's hearing once again highlighted how defamation suits involving political heavyweights often straddle the line between courtroom theatrics and legal complexity.

The case also underscores the broader political climate, where legal battles continue to mirror—and sometimes escalate—the bitter rivalry between two of the country's most dominant political forces. With general elections behind them but political tensions still simmering, this defamation suit may yet play a role in shaping public perceptions and the evolving contest for narrative control.

Pak-Turkey ministers reaffirm ties

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar engaged in a telephonic conversation with his Turkish counterpart, Hakan Fidan, to deliberate on the rapidly evolving regional landscape and reaffirm the two countries' shared commitment to deepening bilateral relations. The call, confirmed by Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesperson, reflected both ministers' intention to coordinate more closely amid a complex geopolitical environment.

During their exchange, Ishaq Dar and Hakan Fidan reviewed recent regional developments and agreed on the necessity of enhancing cooperation on issues of mutual concern. Both emphasised the importance of joint diplomatic efforts aimed at fostering peace and stability across the region, underlining that their countries must work in tandem to meet common challenges.

This renewed commitment to partnership comes at a time when tensions between India and Turkey have surfaced, with New Delhi reportedly threatening to curtail trade ties and suspend operations of a Turkish company involved with Indian airports. Against this backdrop, Pakistan and Turkey appear eager to strengthen their strategic alliance, sending a clear message of solidarity in the face of regional friction.

The conversation between the foreign ministers underlined Islamabad and Ankara's determination to build closer cooperation not only on diplomatic matters but also on broader strategic fronts.

NYT calls out Indian media's role in wartime propaganda

Among the most alarming claims were unverified reports that India had struck Pakistan's nuclear facilities and downed two of its aircraft, sparking fears of dangerous escalation

News Desk

NEW YORK: In a scathing report published by The New York Times, Indian media has been accused of actively disseminating misinformation during the recent four-day conflict with Pakistan, raising serious concerns about the credibility of news reporting in times of war. The report highlights how even established media groups, previously known for their journalistic integrity, became part of a larger narrative built on speculation, unverified claims, and nationalist fervor.

According to the publication, Indian news channels made several false claims with a striking level of detail and confidence. Among the most alarming were reports that India had successfully struck Pakistan's nuclear facilities and that two Pakistani aircraft had been shot down. The report also cited fake news regarding targeted attacks on the Karachi port. All of these claims, The New York Times confirmed, were ultimately debunked through independent investigations and satellite verification.

The newspaper noted that during the heat of the conflict, many Indian television anchors and ana-



lysts adopted a role more akin to cheerleaders than journalists, embracing a hyper-nationalist tone and abandoning critical scrutiny. It described how discussions on air often veered into theatrical territory, with military jargon and dramatic visuals used to heighten the atmosphere, rather than clarify facts for viewers.

In one of the more disturbing instances, Indian channels went so far as to suggest there had been a radiation leak from Pakistan's nuclear facilities. Maps, satellite images, and speculative graphics were shown on screens to support the unfounded claim, despite a complete lack of evidence and no corroboration from international monitoring agencies.

The report paints a grim picture of a media landscape swayed by pa-

triotism and political pressure, where the lines between fact and fiction were deliberately blurred. Media watchdogs and analysts have raised red flags about the long-term consequences of such behavior, warning that disinformation during conflicts can not only escalate tensions but also mislead the public and policymakers alike.

This latest exposé by The New York Times serves as a reminder of the essential role of responsible journalism, especially in moments of national crisis.

As the region continues to recover from the psychological and diplomatic aftershocks of the conflict, questions over the ethics and accountability of wartime reporting in India are likely to remain front and centre in the media discourse.

Pakistan stresses Kashmiri voices must shape conflict resolution

News Desk

NEW YORK: Pakistan's envoy to the United Nations, Asim Iftikhar, has underscored the critical importance of resolving the Kashmir dispute, describing it as a key factor for achieving lasting peace in South Asia. In an interview with a British television channel, Iftikhar stressed that any resolution must respect the aspirations and wishes of the Kashmiri people themselves, highlighting the need for a people-centered approach to the conflict that has long divided Pakistan and India.

Speaking on the ongoing tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbors, the envoy characterized the current situation as fragile and unpredictable, signalling that the path to peace remains uncertain amid continuing mistrust and hostilities. Yet, he expressed cautious hope that diplomatic engagement and international support could pave the way for progress.

In a notable remark, Asim Iftikhar acknowledged the involvement of former U.S. President Donald Trump in efforts related to the Kashmir issue, praising the role he played in facilitating dialogue. This recognition points to the broader international dimension of the conflict, where global powers often seek to influence or mediate the long-standing dispute.

Iftikhar's comments reflect Pakistan's continued emphasis on dialogue and diplomacy, signalling a willingness to pursue peaceful solutions while reaffirming the centrality of Kashmiri voices in determining their own future.

METRO MATTERS

Jl stages city-wide demos over water shortage in Karachi

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi held city-wide protest demonstrations on major arteries of the megalopolis on Friday against the acute water crisis and the rule of the tanker mafia, which the party claims is being facilitated by the government. People from all walks of life took part in the protests, demanding proper water supply for the city.

Speaking on the occasion, the JI leader said that half the city was deprived of water because of what he described as a deliberate water assault on Karachi and its residents by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government in Sindh. He also accused the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) of being hand in glove with the PPP in contributing to the crisis. Both parties, he said, must answer for why the K-IV water supply project remains in limbo.

Taking aim at the city's mayor and the chief minister, Monem Zafar questioned why Karachi continues to be deprived of a basic necessity like water, despite contributing 96 per cent of the province's tax revenue. He added that just two weeks ago, an 84-inch water supply line had developed a leakage once again—marking the sixth time in the past seven months.

Referring to Karachi's water supply infrastructure, he said that Jamaat-e-Islami had previously delivered the K-I, K-II and K-III projects, along with several sewerage initiatives. He noted that the late Nematullah Khan had initiated the K-IV project, but it was never allowed to materialize due to political obstruction by both the MQM-P and the PPP. What began as a Rs25 billion project has now ballooned to Rs200 billion in cost, while the water allocation under the first phase has shrunk from 650 million gallons to just 260 million gallons.

He said that on one hand the project does not appear likely to be completed before mid-2026, and on the other, even if it is completed, it will still not ensure adequate water supply for the city. Only the tanker mafia, he claimed, is benefiting from the current situation. He alleged that instead of cracking down on the mafia, the PPP government proudly boasts about earning significant revenue by selling water to Karachiites through private tankers.

MQM-P lawmakers demand swift action on Hajj visa delays

By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: Lawmakers from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) have voiced strong concern over significant delays in visa issuance for over 67,000 Pakistani pilgrims preparing for Hajj this year. In an urgent and firm statement, the parliamentarians called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and all relevant authorities to swiftly address the backlog and guarantee timely processing of the pending travel documents.

The MQM-P representatives underscored the emotional and spiritual toll these delays are causing. Many of the pilgrims, who have registered through official Hajj schemes after years of saving and hopeful anticipation, remain without their visas despite their scheduled departures drawing near. The lawmakers emphasized that for these individuals, the journey is not simply a matter of travel logistics, but a deeply personal and sacred commitment—a fulfillment of a lifelong spiritual obligation.

Highlighting the gravity of the situation, the MQM-P described the delays as more than mere bureaucratic inefficiency. They stressed that the issue strikes at the core of religious devotion and the faith of thousands of Pakistanis, many of whom have invested not only money but also profound hopes and prayers into the pilgrimage.

In their appeal, the lawmakers urged the government to treat the matter with the utmost urgency, calling for full institutional cooperation to ensure all logistical and administrative hurdles are removed promptly. They emphasized the need for the government to prioritise this issue, so that the pilgrims' spiritual journey can proceed without further distress or disruption.

The statement reflects growing public concern over administrative inefficiencies affecting religious affairs and underscores the pressure on government institutions to safeguard the rights and sentiments of citizens undertaking one of Islam's most important rites. As the Hajj season approaches, the timely resolution of these visa delays remains critical to preserving the trust and faith of Pakistan's Muslim community.

Arts Council Karachi hosts powerful performances for dance day

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: The Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi came alive with music, rhythm and cultural exuberance on International Dance Day as it hosted a spirited celebration at its Auditorium One. The event drew a large crowd of dance enthusiasts and was graced by several prominent figures from the cultural and artistic community.

Among the distinguished attendees were the president of the Arts Council, Muhammad Ahmed Shah; chairman of the Fine Arts Committee, Farrukh Shahab; chairperson of the Women Empowerment Committee, Chand Gul Shah; and chairman of the Stage Show and Special Events Committee, Iqbal Latif.

A variety of dance forms were showcased throughout the evening, ranging from classical and cultural expressions to high-energy hip-hop and popular filmi numbers. The event was a joint effort by the Arts Council Dance Academy and numerous independent dance groups, all contributing to a night filled with diversity and artistic brilliance.

One of the most acclaimed performances came from internationally renowned dancer Nighat Chaudhry, whose exquisite Kathak mesmerised the audience. Adding further flair were standout performances by Mani Chao, Adnan Butt and Abdul Ghani, representing the talent of the Arts Council Dance Academy.

Speaking at the event, President Muhammad Ahmed Shah emphasised the importance of dance as more than an art form, describing it as a therapeutic practice in today's challenging times. "In today's age of widespread depression, dance serves as an excellent form of therapy," he said.

Woman killed, body set ablaze by husband in Orangi

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: In a chilling act of domestic violence, a woman was brutally murdered and her body set on fire inside her own beauty parlour in Karachi's Orangi Town. Police have identified the victim as Saima, the proprietor of the salon, who had married her alleged killer just a week earlier.

Initial investigations by the authorities suggest that the murder was carried out by her second husband, Shahmeer, who is now on the run. According to officials familiar with the case, Shahmeer is accused of using a sharp-edged weapon to kill Saima before setting her body alight, seemingly in an attempt to destroy evidence and mislead investigators.

The gruesome incident has sent shockwaves through the local community, with neighbours expressing horror over the brutality inflicted on a woman known for her independence and work ethic. Police sources confirmed that Saima's remains have been shifted to a hospital where a postmortem examination is underway to determine the exact cause of death and further support the forensic trail.

The motive behind the murder remains unclear, though investigators suspect it may be linked to personal disputes following the recent marriage. Police have launched an intensive manhunt to track down Shahmeer, who fled the crime scene shortly after allegedly committing the murder. Raids are being carried out at multiple locations, and authorities say they are confident of making an arrest soon.

The incident has once again brought to the fore the alarming rise in violence against women in domestic settings, prompting calls for more robust legal safeguards and awareness campaigns to protect vulnerable women. For now, Saima's salon stands shuttered—its walls scorched, her dreams turned to ashes.

DIG Traffic Karachi honored at Fifth Road Safety conference

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: A significant moment marked the fifth edition of the Road Safety Conference held in Karachi, as special guest Atif Iqbal presented a commemorative shield to Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Traffic, Syed Pir Muhammad Shah, recognising his contributions to traffic management and public safety.

The conference, dedicated to raising awareness and promoting dialogue on road safety, brought together key stakeholders including law enforcement officials, civil society members and transport experts. It served as a platform to highlight ongoing efforts and future strategies aimed at improving traffic systems and reducing road accidents in Karachi and beyond.

Atif Iqbal acknowledged the efforts of the Karachi Traffic Police, praising DIG Syed Pir Muhammad Shah for his dedication and leadership. The presentation of the shield symbolised appreciation for Shah's continued work in promoting safer roads and better traffic regulation across the city.

Discussions also focused on educational initiatives and collaborative action to address the challenges faced by commuters and law enforcement alike. The event concluded with a shared commitment among participants to support sustainable traffic solutions and foster a culture of responsible road use throughout the country.

Nasreen Jalil highlights tax cuts as priority for upcoming budget

By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: Senior Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan leader and rights-focused senator Nasreen Jalil has taken a firm stance ahead of the 2025/2026 budget, urging Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to prioritise the welfare of salaried and middle-income groups by reducing their tax burden.

In a detailed letter addressed to the prime minister, Jalil stressed the urgent need for economic policies that do not merely reflect numbers on paper but genuinely uplift the grassroots level of society. Jalil's letter underscores a critical perspective on Pakistan's economic growth, highlighting that true progress remains elusive unless it translates into tangible benefits for the majority of citizens.

The MQM-P leader argues that meaningful reform and innovation in economic policy are essential to address the long-standing inequalities that have left vast segments of the population struggling for basic necessities.

Drawing attention to the country's deep-rooted socio-economic disparities, Jalil pointed out that over the past seventy years, roughly only



two percent of the privileged class have reaped the rewards of economic development.

Meanwhile, the majority of Pakistanis continue to live below the poverty line, a stark reality that undermines efforts to build a strong and stable nation. The senator urged the prime minister to use the upcoming budget as a vehicle for change, one that genuinely reflects the hopes and aspirations of the people. She called for the government to take a proactive role in reducing deprivation and fostering inclusive growth, emphasizing that ninety-five percent of the population—those who face economic hardship—deserve meaningful attention in fiscal planning.

Nasreen Jalil's appeal to the government is a reminder of the persistent challenges Pakistan faces in bridging economic divides.

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EDITORIAL

Will the next world war for water?

As humanity readies itself to touch the red dust of Mars and celebrates the anniversaries of moon landings past, a stark contradiction emerges on our home planet. Water covers more than two thirds of the Earth's surface, yet we face the real possibility that this most basic necessity could become the catalyst for conflict and suffering. The irony is bitter: we race to conquer new worlds while struggling to share and preserve the one that sustains us. Our species has never been more inventive. We design rockets to pierce the cosmos, build artificial intelligences that learn and adapt, and engineer colossal infrastructure projects to channel the forces of nature. And yet, the simple act of collecting rainwater remains neglected in many parts of the globe. Glacial meltwater flows unchecked into the oceans, rivers run dry in parched seasons, and aquifers fall silent as pumps lie idle.

While headlines praise scientific breakthroughs, they rarely note that one of humanity's oldest and most urgent challenges—equitable water management—remains unresolved. This is not an abstract debate for academic journals. It is a matter of life and death for millions. Last year, nearly half a billion people experienced water scarcity severe enough to undermine their health, livelihoods and security. As freshwater reserves dwindle, tensions simmer in communities once bound by shared rivers and common reliance on seasonal rains. Local disputes over irrigation rights now risk igniting national hostilities. The specter of "water wars" is no longer science fiction but a looming reality. A flashpoint in this emerging crisis lies on the subcontinent, where two nuclear-armed neighbors share the waters of the Indus river system.

Reports have surfaced that India's leadership is quietly advancing plans to extend the Ranbir Canal on the Chenab River from its current length to nearly 120 kilometers. According to a respected British news agency, this expansion could divert up to 150 cubic meters of water per second—enough to transform the agricultural prospects of vast Indian districts while leaving downstream communities scrambling for what remains. What is most troubling is the hushed tone of these deliberations. Neither New Delhi's prime ministerial office nor the ministries responsible for water and external affairs have publicly acknowledged the project. Even state-run hydropower entities involved in its planning have declined comment. Such silence speaks volumes.

When infrastructure decisions of this magnitude proceed without transparent dialogue or regional consent, the risk of mistrust and miscalculation escalates dramatically. Earlier ceasefire accords and peace parleys may ring hollow if the tap on shared rivers is turned in one direction alone. For Pakistan, where nearly 80 per cent of agriculture depends on Indus waters, a loss of even a small fraction of flow can devastate harvests, drive migration from rural areas and fuel social unrest. This would not be a border skirmish over artillery salvos but a creeping siege on the very land and livelihoods of those who depend on the river's generosity. Yet the real scandal does not lie merely in the engineering of canals or the rerouting of streams. It lies in the deliberate engineering of imbalance.

Water has always been more than a resource; it is the lifeblood of communities, an emblem of shared responsibility and a foundation of trust across borders. To weaponize it is to sink the bedrock of cooperation on which peaceful societies are built. The world's muted reaction to these developments is not neutrality but complicity. It is a silent gamble that the thirsty will not rise in anger and that the wells will somehow fill themselves. Global institutions tasked with mediating transboundary water disputes are not powerless, but their voice grows faint in an era when geopolitical priorities shift toward competition for resources, markets and influence. Climate change intensifies these pressures by exacerbating droughts in some regions and drought-like conditions in seasons when rivers once flowed freely. Communities that once celebrated the annual flood now brace for its failure.

Farmers who tilled the riverbanks for generations find themselves pleading with bureaucrats far removed from the fields to honor long-standing agreements. And still, the world gazes skyward, planning missions to asteroids and contemplating habitats under domes on distant planets. Those ambitions deserve celebration, but they must not blind us to the responsibilities that bind us to this world. Water is not merely an input for industry or a geopolitical bargaining chip. It is a right enshrined in international law, a necessity for human dignity and a catalyst for development. Rainwater harvesting, river basin commissions, aquifer recharge projects and equitable distribution agreements are not nostalgic relics of a bygone era. They are urgent imperatives for our collective future.

To confront this crisis, policymakers must weave water security into the fabric of national strategies and international relations. That means placing transparent, inclusive negotiations at the heart of transboundary water management. It means empowering local communities to monitor flows, protect watersheds and hold governments accountable. It means recognizing that every drop diverted upstream can have cascading effects on millions downstream. And it means ensuring that technology, from satellite monitoring to smart irrigation systems, is harnessed not just for profit but for fairness and resilience. Civil society and the media also have critical roles to play. Investigative reporting on water infrastructure projects can bring hidden manoeuvres into the light of public scrutiny. Community-driven campaigns can pressure governments to codify water rights and enforce environmental safeguards.

Education initiatives can foster a new generation attuned to the value of water beyond mere convenience—instilling habits of conservation that begin at home and extend to global consciousness. If history offers any lesson, it is that conflict over water seldom erupts with a single dramatic moment. It simmers in broken promises, in wells dug too deep, in rivers rerouted without consent, and in negotiations postponed for another day.

Unless that day arrives with shared resolve, the grievance will deepen, alliances will fracture, and the thirst for justice may turn into a thirst for retaliation. The choice before us is elemental.

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

By Uzma Ehtasham



In the sunlit halls of Muscat, negotiators from Washington and Tehran gather amid a cloud of uncertainty. Their task is daunting: to revive an accord that once curbed Iran's nuclear ambitions in exchange for sanctions relief. Yet the real challenge lies not solely in technical clauses or verification protocols, but in the capricious conduct of the world's most powerful leader. On Monday, President Donald Trump speaks of agreement. By Friday, he brandishes threats of military action. In this fragile dance of diplomacy, such mixed messages risk turning cautious optimism into dangerous miscalculation.

It is no secret that diplomacy thrives on consistency. When interlocutors understand the ground rules, they can offer concessions, build trust, and craft compromises. But where threats and promises alternate like pendulum swings, even the most patient counterpart grows wary. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian captured this dilemma precisely when he asked the world to consider which Trump to believe—the peacemaker or the warmonger. His question carries an urgency that extends far beyond Muscat's conference rooms. It resonates in capitals from Brussels to Beijing, in embassies where anxious officials struggle to interpret the next tweet or press briefing.

For Iranian officials, the prospect of abandoning nuclear development in return for lifted sanctions represents an opportunity

to reintegrate into global markets, revive domestic industries battered by inflation, and provide relief to ordinary citizens. Yet the specter of sudden policy shifts from Washington breeds scepticism. When Trump congratulates himself for making "very serious negotiations for long-term peace" in Qatar one day, and then warns of "nuclear dust" the next, it becomes impossible to know whether any accord inked in Muscat can endure. This unpredictability threatens not only the talks themselves, but regional stability at large.

Across the Middle East, allies and adversaries alike watch Muscat with bated breath. Israel, which views Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat, demands firm guarantees. Gulf states, already wary of Tehran's influence, seek assurance that future ties with Iran will not undermine their own security. Yet all these voices rely on Washington's steadfastness. If the United States cannot uphold its end of a deal, why should any partner trust its word? In a world where reputations matter as much as weapons arsenals, credibility becomes a nation's most priceless currency.

The politics within Iran mirror this dilemma. Hardliners decry negotiations as capitulation, arguing that only technological mastery of nuclear enrichment secures true sovereignty. Moderates, emboldened by the prospect of sanctions relief, push for engagement with the West. Muscat's talks represent their best chance to shift Iran's trajectory away from isolation. Yet if a sudden reversal from Washington deprives them of political cover, hardliners will gain ground, and the risk of renewed nuclear escalation will surge. A precarious balance hangs in

the balance—a balance that cannot withstand reckless rhetoric.

In Washington, too, the stakes extend beyond checkboxes and deadlines. Trump's unorthodox style, once hailed by supporters as a break from stale protocol, now sow confusion among allies who once relied on American leadership. NATO summits turn awkward when allies wonder whether US commitments will endure. UN assemblies grow uneasy as diplomats parse presidential speeches for hidden threats. The State Department finds itself in an endless cycle of damage control. Such turbulence invites opportunists who seek advantage in chaos, and none stand to benefit more than those who profit from conflict.

Yet the remedy does not lie in stifling spirited debate or in demanding unbroken loyalty to past agreements. True diplomatic success requires dialogue that acknowledges both concerns and aspirations on either side.

It calls for transparency about national red lines and a willingness to craft solutions that address core security fears. In this case, Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology must be balanced against the legitimate interests of its neighbors. Regional mechanisms for monitoring and dispute resolution must be strengthened. And, most crucially, the United States must commit to honoring its undertakings, regardless of domestic political winds.

Sceptics will argue that such steadiness is a luxury reserved for governments with less pressing electoral concerns. They will point to the turnover of administrations in Washington, the fierce battles over fiscal priorities, and the clamor for toughness in for-

ign policy. Yet the cost of inconsistency far outweighs the benefits of momentary posturing. A failed deal in Muscat would not only stoke regional tension, but also splinter the coalition of partners whose unified front has thus far restrained Iran's nuclear ambitions. Once fractured, it will be far harder to rebuild.

The world cannot afford to treat Muscat as another news cycle to be spun. For the people of Iran, of the United States, and of all nations connected by the vaulting powers of modern diplomacy, the outcome will shape not only geopolitical maps, but also the daily lives of millions. A reliable agreement promises relief from economic hardship, reassurance against military conflict, and the renewal of channels for cultural exchange. A collapse would sow bitterness that could echo for decades.

History reminds us that peace is rarely a one time victory lap. It is a fragile achievement, maintained through vigilance, goodwill, and consistency. As negotiators return to their tables in Muscat, they carry with them more than technical briefs—they carry the hopes of a world seeking to escape the shadows of conflict. For diplomacy to deliver on those hopes, leaders must prove that their words hold weight beyond the moment they are spoken. Only then can Muscat transcend its role as a mere waypoint and become the birthplace of a more stable and predictable order.

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Bullets or books

By Atiq Raja



In a world that still harbors heartbreaking contradictions—where children fall asleep on empty stomachs and millions are denied access to education—the relentless global obsession with warfare stands as one of humanity's most troubling paradoxes. We inhabit a planet of immense wealth, innovation, and collective intelligence, yet we continue to prioritize instruments of destruction over the tools that build lasting peace and prosperity. The question is no longer just moral. It is painfully practical: why squander trillions on war when we could invest in a better future for everyone?

The latest figures from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) are as jaw-dropping as they are sobering. In 2024 alone, global military expenditure surged to more than \$2.4 trillion. To make sense of such a number, consider this: it is more than the combined GDP of dozens of low-income countries. It's enough to feed the world's hungry, educate every child, and provide healthcare to those who have never seen a clinic. But instead of channeling this wealth into healing, learning, or growing, we use it to arm ourselves against one another. To suggest that war is

expensive is not just an understatement. Wars destroy not just cities or bridges—they unravel lives. They tear families apart, push entire generations into trauma, and leave economies in tatters. They do not end with ceasefires. Long after the last bullet has been fired, the consequences linger: in refugee camps, in broken communities, in the silence of mothers who have buried their sons. Still, nations pour billions into tanks, missiles, and high-tech weaponry each year, under the guise of security.

But what does security mean in a world of existential threats that can't be fought with guns? The planet is warming at an alarming pace. New diseases emerge with frightening frequency. Inequality continues to widen, fuelling resentment and instability. These are the battles that define the 21st century. And yet, the arsenals we stockpile are utterly useless against them. Imagine if just a tenth of that colossal military budget were redirected. A mere 10 per cent could transform the lives of millions. Clean water could flow in every home, from the arid plains of Sub-Saharan Africa to the crowded slums of South Asia. Classrooms could replace child labor, empowering the next generation with knowledge instead of trauma. Hospitals could reach the remotest corners of the globe, saving mothers and children who now die from preventable diseases. This isn't a utopian dream. It's a tangible possi-

bility—if we muster the will to shift our priorities.

Of course, proponents of heavy military investment often speak of deterrence, of being prepared, of defending sovereignty. National security, they argue, is non-negotiable. But human development is security. A society with educated citizens, dignified employment, and equitable opportunities is inherently more stable. Nations that invest in justice, youth empowerment, and social cohesion build walls against extremism more effective than any barbed wire or drone surveillance.

And history, if nothing else, should teach us humility. Rarely has a war led to permanent peace. Often, it has only planted seeds for future conflict, leaving behind scarred landscapes and angry hearts. The costs of post-war rebuilding frequently eclipse what it would have taken to prevent the war in the first place.

What we need today is not more bombs, but more bridges—not just in steel and concrete, but in understanding, compassion, and mutual aid. The crises of our age do not wear uniforms. They manifest in climate disasters, food shortages, water scarcity, and displacement. These are battles that demand cooperation across borders, not confrontation at them. Redirecting even a fraction of global defence budgets is not merely a pacifist's plea. It is sound economics and

moral clarity. It is an invitation to world leaders to trade the illusion of strength for the reality of resilience. To swap short-term power plays for long-term progress. To view the well-being of every child, not just one's own, as the true marker of national success. The idea of a global peace dividend—where nations collectively agree to reduce military spending and channel resources into sustainable development—is not as far-fetched as it may seem.

We have seen international agreements work before, from nuclear non-proliferation to climate accords. What's missing is not the framework, but the courage. We live in a time when humanity faces a critical crossroads. Do we continue on the well-trodden path of militarization, or do we take a bold step towards a future built on empathy, education, and equity? Every dollar spent on war is a dollar not spent on hope. Every weapon built is a school not funded, a hospital not staffed, a mouth left unfed. The true strength of a nation lies not in how many bombs it can drop, but in how many lives it can lift. In how well it takes care of its most vulnerable. In how confidently it can say that its future—and the future of its children—is brighter than its past. War wastes. Development builds. It's not just a slogan. It's the moral and economic truth of our times. The choice is ours. And it is long overdue.

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Judge intent, not tailoring

By Abdul Rahman Patel



They say clothes mirror character, but in the theatre of global power, it is not the fabric we must scrutinize—it's the intention stitched beneath. As presidents pose for photo ops and royalty trades in petroleum diplomacy, the world's most important conversations no longer take place in war rooms or parliaments, but in wardrobes, press kits, and contracts inked behind velvet drapes. In such a world, conscience is not worn—it's auctioned. When Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived at the White House wearing a plain olive-green T-shirt, it triggered not just chatter, but scorn. No tailored suit. No gleaming lapel pin. Just a man in wartime clothes, the kind you don't choose for appearance but necessity.

Donald Trump, never one to miss a moment of theatre, ridiculed him: "What is this—showing up like some teenage punk?" It was vintage Trump: performance packaged as provocation. But Zelenskyy, with the unflinching poise of someone who's seen actual fire, leaned in and whispered, "I didn't

borrow it from your dad. I earned it." And there, in that quiet sting, lay a truth more cutting than any tailor's shears. Contrast that with Trump's visit to Qatar. The Emir received him in a traditional robe, sandals, and by one account, a complete absence of undergarments. At one point during their exchange, the Emir lifted his robe to wipe his nose—a move that would make even the boldest spin doctor wince. Trump paused, expression twitching, before letting out a well-rehearsed laugh.

Because it wasn't really about robes or decorum. It was about billions in American investments and fighter jet deals. One wrong chuckle, one misunderstood comment, and the Emir's cheque might have been shredded before it ever left the royal office. This is the gospel of our current world order, where diplomacy is dressed in dollar signs and sincerity is traded for spectacle. In such a system, the man in the trench-colored tee is mocked as undignified, while the man in flowing robes is hailed as an icon of culture—so long as he shops American. The problem isn't style. It's the hierarchy of meaning we've attached to it. The Spanish writer Miguel de Luis captured the modern religion best: "Capitalism is the religion. Banks are churches. Wealth is heaven. Poverty is hell.

The rich are saints. The poor are sinners. Property is sacred. And money is God." In such a faith, image replaces essence. Charity becomes leverage. Aid becomes advertisement.

And the poor? They are told to be grateful for every coin tossed their way, regardless of whether it comes with strings, shackles, or stock options. In this age, when money becomes the supreme deity, even a T-shirt worn with honesty is treated as blasphemy. Meanwhile, arrogance cloaked in a designer robe is canonized—provided there's a cheque dangling from its sleeve. Leaders are no longer judged by the courage of their convictions, but by the size of their investment portfolios and the smoothness of their public relations firms. Integrity is no longer a virtue, but a vulnerability.

Speak too plainly, and you're dismissed as unsophisticated. Dress too simply, and you're labelled a beggar.

Zelenskyy is derided not for lacking principles, but for lacking polish. Because in a world intoxicated by spectacle, survival is not glamorous. Defending your people is not as photogenic as signing arms deals in a chandelier-lit hall. But what exactly do we lose when we trade grit for gloss? What the world needs now is a new kind of leader-

ship—one that is recognized not by the luxury stitched into its collar, but by the resolve that runs through its every word and act. Leaders who understand that dignity is not negotiable. Who refuse to trade their nation's future for the fleeting glow of investment headlines? Who do not conflate sovereignty with silence, or patriotism with posing?

Leaders who are moved not by billions dangled across conference tables, but by the beating hearts of the people they serve. Because the danger is not just in misplaced admiration—it's in the stories we tell ourselves about who deserves respect. If we continue to crown the loudest bidder as a peacemaker and label the desperate as beggars, we risk losing sight of what true leadership looks like. Not all that glitters is gold, and not all that's worn with humility is weakness. Otherwise, the same world will keep calling Zelenskyy a pauper and the Emir a saint. One, because he wears the dust of war. The other, because he buys the shine of power. And we, the global audience, will continue clapping for the wrong play.

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

Uses of a victory

By Ghazi Salahuddin

Can I say that I am writing this column in a country that has been transformed, that it is not the same Pakistan as it was ten days ago? Well, so much has certainly changed, and the extent to which Pakistan can be meaningfully transformed is something that we need to examine carefully.

But, for now, we may set all contemplations aside and just celebrate this moment which is some kind of a divine gift for a people forever stuck in a state of political discontent and social unrest. The manner in which our armed forces have triumphed over a much bigger adversary in a four-day encounter has lifted the spirits of the nation and brought it together.

A miracle it has been, almost. After Pakistan and India agreed to an immediate ceasefire on Saturday, May 10, after a short spell of deadly jet fighter, missiles, drone and artillery attacks, some realities have begun to emerge. Initially, both sides claimed victory, in keeping with the practice in previous conflicts between the two nuclear countries. However, the world has recognised the astounding gains the Pakistani military has made.

Hence, there is ample justification for a collective expression of joy and pride. A war

against a traditional rival generally unites the nation and generates strong patriotic sentiments. We have had our armed confrontations with India, mostly with uncertain outcomes. This time, Pakistan delivered a devastating blow to India, mainly in a quick and dramatic combat in the air.

So, just as the ceasefire was announced, surprisingly by President Donald Trump of the United States, we were ready to hoist our flag of victory. It is interesting how Trump would want to take the credit for stopping a possible "nuclear war" and how he proposed to resolve the Kashmir issue. But it is hard to see this intervention as the way forward for the resolution of a conflict that has become an enigma in modern history.

Anyway, the point I am making is that Pakistan has earned an opportunity to be genuinely proud of the capabilities and performance of its armed forces. What I find exciting is the passion and the enthusiasm with which the people of Pakistan are celebrating this occasion. There is also this sense of relief that a great disaster has been averted with the vindication of our stance and our strategy.

I must also admit that this has been a

week of some fun in joyous gatherings of friends and relatives where we recounted the stories and memes that have circulated on social media. It might be said that we have scored a big victory on this front too.

I would not want to focus much on how the government is officially celebrating the supremacy of our armed forces, as demonstrated in early Saturday morning strikes on military installations in India and India-held Kashmir. The country-wide observance of Youm-e-Tashakkur on Friday was meant to assert that "the world is stunned by our military might" and to affirm that we are "a nation united in heart and soul".

Pakistan is surely justified in highlighting this victory, which will help in establishing a new balance in South Asia, raising the people's morale and enhancing their trust and confidence in the competence of the armed forces. A tempo is being created that may contribute positively to other national pursuits.

Meanwhile, it is obvious that the story that began with India's aggression is not yet over. The ceasefire, thankfully, is holding and through military contacts between the two countries, it has been extended to May

18. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar informed the Senate on Thursday that Pakistan has sought a "comprehensive dialogue" with India.

Still, things remain uncertain. India has been wounded and would want to save its face through whatever means. In his first address to the nation after the ceasefire, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India "only paused" its military action against Pakistan. "If another terrorist attack against India is carried out, a strong response will be given", he asserted.

The world watched the conflagration in South Asia with interest. One reason was that both are nuclear countries, and there are always chances of a misadventure from either side. One headline in The New York Times was: "Nuclear war avoided, again. But next time?"

Another curiosity for the world was that this was the first time that Chinese jets and the missiles they carried were used in combat anywhere in the world. As The Guardian noted, "Pakistan's use of J-10C jets and missiles exposed potency of Chinese weaponry".

Coming back to the great fervour with which we have observed our Youm-e-Tashakkur, it surely is a great tribute to our armed forces that they were able to overpower their Indian adversaries.

Pezeshkian criticizes Washington's erratic approach under Trump

Pezeshkian highlighted the stark contradiction in Trump's rhetoric, where calls for peace abruptly shift to aggressive threats, revealing a deeply inconsistent approach

News Desk

TEHRAN: Iran's president Masoud Pezeshkian has sent a clear message to the international community: Tehran does not seek war, despite ongoing threats and heightened tensions with the United States. Speaking candidly to international media, Pezeshkian criticized the erratic nature of Washington's approach under President Donald Trump, highlighting the contradictory signals that have left Iran questioning the sincerity of US intentions.



fragile diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving one of the most contentious issues in global politics: Iran's nuclear program. The ongoing nuclear talks, which have seen numerous ups and downs over recent years, remain a crucial yet precarious lifeline in the fraught relationship between Tehran and Washington. While past negotiations, including the landmark 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), had raised hopes of easing sanctions and curbing nuclear proliferation, those hopes were dashed when the US with-

Pezeshkian pointed out the stark inconsistency in Trump's rhetoric, noting how the US leader often alternates between calls for peace and aggressive threats.

"We don't know which of the president's statements to believe," he said, reflecting the confusion and frustration in Tehran over Washington's shifting posture. This ambivalence has clouded the

drawn unilaterally in 2018 and reinstated harsh economic penalties. Since then, tensions have escalated dramatically, with both sides exchanging accusations and engaging in proxy conflicts across the Middle East. Iran has been accused by the US and its allies of sponsoring militant groups and destabilizing regional security, while Tehran insists its nuclear ambitions are peaceful and its regional policies defensive. The backdrop of these disputes includes incidents like the US killing of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in 2020,

further souring relations. Despite these deep-rooted conflicts, Pezeshkian's comments underscore Iran's cautious willingness to continue dialogue. He stressed that the Iranian government prefers diplomatic engagement over military confrontation, signalling a resolve to pursue negotiations even in the face of uncertainty and external pressures. This stance, however, exists against a complex web of mistrust, where every diplomatic gesture is scrutinized and met with suspicion on both sides.

The broader international community watches closely as these talks unfold, recognizing that the future of Iran-US relations carries profound implications not only for the Middle East but for global security. Pezeshkian's remarks reflect the delicate balancing act Iran faces—asserting its sovereignty and regional influence while seeking to avoid the devastating costs of war.

Jl leader praises Pakistan's response to India

By Faizan Khan

LAHORE: Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, has declared that Pakistan has secured a significant victory against what he described as Indian fanaticism and arrogance. Speaking to supporters, he praised Pakistan's measured and prudent response to Indian aggression, highlighting the nation's strength and unity in the face of external threats.

Hafiz Naeem underscored that Kashmir must remain the foremost issue in any future negotiations between the two countries, firmly rejecting any talks that exclude the Kashmir dispute. His remarks came amid speeches delivered at the Defense Pakistan and Gaza marches in Abbot-



tabad, where he expressed the nation's unwavering support for the armed forces confronting Indian hostility.

He spoke of a renewed sense of national solidarity, stating that Indian aggression has brought the country together and lifted the spirit of despair that had gripped many young people. According to Hafiz Naeem, the path Pakistan has chosen—standing resolutely for its sovereignty and dignity—is the path to eventual success.

Dar urges discretion on Pakistan's water strategy

Dar cautioned that publicly disclosing water policy details could weaken Pakistan's hand at the negotiating table and risk further heightening regional tensions

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar has underscored the critical need for discretion in discussing Pakistan's strategies on water-related issues, reflecting the sensitive and complex nature of the matter amid ongoing tensions with India. Speaking in an interview with a private television channel, Dar emphasized that revealing government plans in public forums is neither appropriate nor strategic, especially given the geopolitical weight these issues carry.



He reiterated that Pakistan has already issued a firm and unequivocal response to India regarding concerns over the Indus Waters Treaty, a historic and highly sensitive agreement that governs the sharing of water resources between the two countries. Dar warned that airing details of water-related policies in the media could undermine Pakistan's negotiating position and potentially escalate tensions further.

On the recent developments surrounding the ceasefire, the Deputy Prime Minister revealed that the United States Secretary of

State had contacted Pakistan, relaying India's readiness to agree to a ceasefire. Pakistan, Dar confirmed, responded positively, expressing willingness to engage in peace talks provided India's intentions were genuine.

Despite this hopeful outcome, Dar made clear that Pakistan remains vigilant and prepared for any eventuality. He stated that Islamabad communicated to the US that if India were to resume hostilities, Pakistan reserves the right to respond decisively to protect its sovereignty. This firm stance underscores Islamabad's commitment to safeguarding its national interests while pursuing peaceful resolution where possible.

Further highlighting Pakistan's comprehensive approach to the conflict, Dar noted that the country's Parliament was consulted following the ceasefire agreement,

signaling a unified national response to the delicate situation. This move reflects Pakistan's intention to ensure that all major decisions regarding security and diplomacy carry the weight of parliamentary consensus, reinforcing democratic oversight in matters of national importance.

Dar's comments shed light on the careful balancing act Pakistan must maintain—asserting its rights and readiness to defend them, while simultaneously keeping diplomatic channels open and managing sensitive issues with strategic prudence. His call for measured disclosure serves as a reminder of the fragile and volatile nature of Pakistan-India relations, particularly concerning water rights and security, where even a minor misstep can have far-reaching consequences.

Indian woman YouTuber arrested on spying charges for Pakistan

News Desk

NEW DEHLI: Indian police have arrested travel vlogger and YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra on charges of spying for Pakistan, a development that underscores the growing tensions and security concerns between the two neighbors. Malhotra, who runs a popular YouTube channel called 'Desi.Indo.Jo' with over 375,000 subscribers, was taken into custody in the Hisar area of Chandigarh state, according to Indian media reports.

Authorities allege that Malhotra's activities posed a serious threat to India's national security. Investigations suggest that in 2023, she travelled



to Pakistan and maintained communication with individuals identified as Pakistani agents through messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Snapchat. Indian police claim that she shared sensitive information during these interactions, raising fears of espionage.

The case against Malhotra has been formally registered, with investigators actively probing the extent of her alleged activities. Officials have not disclosed specific details about the information she is accused of transmitting, but the arrest reflects the heightened vigilance of Indian security forces amid ongoing hostility with Pakistan.

This incident comes at a time of intensified scrutiny of cross-border exchanges, especially given the long history of mistrust and conflict between India and Pakistan. The arrest of a social media figure known for travel content also highlights the expanding scope of security concerns, where even seemingly benign online activities are being examined closely.

Malhotra's detention has sparked debate about the balance between national security and freedom of expression, as well as the implications for ordinary citizens engaging with cross-border cultures.

As investigations continue, the case is likely to fuel further tensions, reinforcing the fragile and often fraught nature of India-Pakistan relations.

Three Iranian nationals charged in UK counter-terrorism investigation

News Desk

LONDON: The Metropolitan Police in London have charged three Iranian nationals under the National Security Act following an extensive counter-terrorism investigation, underscoring ongoing concerns about foreign intelligence activities within the UK. The three men, all London residents, face serious allegations related to assisting an Iranian intelligence service over a period spanning from August 2024 to February 2025.

Mostafa Sepahvand, living in St John's Wood, Farhad Javadi Manesh from Kensal Rise, and Shapur Qolikhani Nouri of Ealing were arrested on 3 May and are set to appear before Westminster Magistrates' Court. The charges against them include accusations of espionage and surveillance activities targeting individuals within the UK. Sepahvand faces additional allegations of violent assault, intensifying the gravity of the case.

This investigation high-



lights the challenges posed by foreign intelligence operations on British soil, particularly involving individuals who may be embedded within local communities. The police have not disclosed the specific details or targets of the alleged espionage, but the nature of the charges signals a significant threat to national security.

Separately, another person arrested under the National Security Act on 9 May has been released without charge, demonstrating the careful scrutiny applied during this investigation.

Commander Dominic Murphy of the Metropolitan Police's Counter-Terrorism Command emphasised the

complexity and seriousness of the case. He urged the public to refrain from speculation, reminding them that the legal process must be allowed to proceed fairly while also noting the importance of supporting those affected by the allegations.

The charges against these individuals come amid a broader backdrop of heightened tension between the UK and Iran, including concerns over intelligence operations, diplomatic strains, and regional security issues. This case serves as a stark reminder of the persistent espionage threats faced by countries navigating complex international relations.

Railways minister engages WB on reform plans

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani recently held a key meeting with a delegation from the World Bank to discuss ongoing reforms in Pakistan Railways. The discussions centered on improving governance within the railway system and, in particular, upgrading track infrastructure, which remains vital to enhancing operational efficiency and safety.

The delegation, led by Jun Jung Eon Oh, the World Bank's South Asia Manager, included several transport experts who exchanged detailed views on the landmark ML-1 project alongside other railway initiatives. The ML-1 project, considered the backbone of Pakistan's railway modernization efforts, aims to revamp the main railway line, boosting speed, capacity, and reliability.

President praises military's rapid response in repelling attack

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has lauded Pakistan's armed forces for their swift and decisive response during Operation Bunyan-e-Marsos, declaring that "history will bear witness" to how the nation's defenders repelled the enemy within hours.

Speaking during his visit to Gujranwala Cantonment, the president said the military stood "like a wall of steel," drawing strength from the unyielding spirit of the people.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir received the president during his visit, where the two reviewed the progress and success of the recent military operation, dubbed the "Battle of Truth."

President Zardari com-



mended the professionalism, discipline, and high moral character displayed by officers and soldiers. He emphasized that the sacrifices of the martyrs remain a sacred trust for the nation and a lasting source of pride.

"The message has been sent loud and clear," Zardari remarked. "Pakistan stands strong, unified, and ready."

Meeting with troops on the ground, the president expressed deep admiration for their morale and commitment, congratulating them

on the operation's successful completion. He affirmed that the outcome had not only demonstrated military capability but also reinforced Pakistan's resolve in the face of aggression.

Operation Bunyan-e-Marsos, named symbolically after the "Foundation of the Martyrs," was launched to counter and neutralize hostile threats in the region, and its swift conclusion is being hailed as a display of unity between the military and the nation at large.

Rahul Gandhi calls Jaishankar's revelation 'crime'

News Desk

NEW DEHLI: Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi has launched a scathing attack on the Modi-led government following Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar's startling admission that Pakistan was informed in advance of Indian military strikes. In a statement released to the press, Gandhi called the move a "crime" and accused the government of compromising national security.

"Informing Pakistan before launching strikes is nothing short of betrayal," Gandhi said. "Foreign Minister Jaishankar has openly confessed to it. The nation deserves answers." Demanding clarity on



who authorized the disclosure, the Congress leader questioned whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself approved the decision to alert Pakistan before military action. "Who gave the green signal to notify Pakistan before our own Air Force took off? This is not diplomacy; this

is dereliction of duty," he added.

Gandhi further asked the government to disclose the exact number of Indian Air Force jets lost in the aftermath of the strikes, suggesting that the public has been kept in the dark about critical operational losses. "The peo-

ple of India have a right to know the truth. How many aircraft did we lose? What price did we pay?" he demanded. Jaishankar's earlier statement, in which he said Pakistan was informed prior to the strikes, has drawn widespread criticism from opposition leaders and analysts alike.

While the Foreign Ministry has not issued a follow-up clarification, the revelation has opened the government to accusations of strategic mishandling and lack of transparency. The controversy comes at a politically sensitive time, as national security remains a central theme in India's ongoing discourse ahead of the elections.

Cybercrime network busted in Multan, 21 arrested

By our correspondent

MULTAN: In a major breakthrough against transnational cybercrime, Pakistani intelligence agencies, in collaboration with the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency, have dismantled a global cybercrime network operating out of Multan. The operation led to the arrest of 21 suspects, including the alleged ring-leader, Rameez Shehzad, who is reportedly involved in multimillion-dollar online fraud schemes targeting American and other foreign nationals.

According to officials, the raid was the result of joint intelligence sharing between Pakistan, the United States' Federal Bureau of Investiga-



tion (FBI), and Dutch law enforcement authorities. The arrested individuals are accused of orchestrating sophisticated scams using digital platforms, including identity theft, phishing, and financial fraud.

During the crackdown, officials recovered substantial digital evidence, including laptops, smartphones,

and various data storage devices. Investigators believe the network exploited loopholes in global communication platforms to siphon off funds from unsuspecting victims across multiple countries. The spokesperson for the cybercrime agency stated that all suspects have been booked under strict legal provisions.

Youth vital to national stability, says DG ISPR

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: In a powerful address in Islamabad, Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry highlighted the crucial role of Pakistan's youth in the country's ongoing efforts to safeguard its peace and sovereignty.

Speaking to a gathering of students and teachers, he underscored that unity and collective action were essential in countering the malicious intentions of the nation's adversaries. Lieutenant General Chaudhry reaffirmed that Pakistan remains a beacon of peace, asserting that the country's victories—whether on the battlefield or through



diplomatic efforts—are fundamentally victories for peace and stability.

He saluted the dedication and hard work of educators across Pakistan, offering the full appreciation of the Pakistan Army to those shaping the minds of the nation's future leaders. Reflecting on recent challenges, the DG ISPR expressed confidence that

Pakistan's future is not only secure but also holds immense promise. He assured the nation that, despite the hurdles, the youth of Pakistan are well-positioned to lead the country toward progress.

Addressing the students directly, Lieutenant General Chaudhry responded to critics who had previously questioned the army's role. "Those

who used to say the army doesn't do its job—ask them now whether the army did its duty or not," he remarked. He further pointed to those who had once doubted the integrity and commitment of the country's armed forces, questioning whether they would now hold themselves accountable for their past remarks.