

## PM expresses confidence in Navy amid secure maritime frontiers

The navy's current operations form a key part of a wider strategy aimed at defending national sovereignty and preserving regional stability

By Uzma Ehtasham

KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to the Pakistan Navy Dockyard was a clear demonstration of the government's commitment to recognizing the vital role the navy plays in safeguarding the country's maritime frontiers. "The role of the Pakistan Navy is central not only to our national defence but also to the uninterrupted movement of commerce across our waters," Shehbaz Sharif stated.

Welcomed by Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, the Prime Minister's tour was marked by the presence of key military leaders, including Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zahoor Ahmed Baber Sidhu, underscoring a unified message of joint military cohesion at a time of growing regional security concerns. Onboard the PNS Taimur, a



Type 054-A class destroyer, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was briefed on the navy's strategic outlook and operational readiness.

The visit provided an in-depth view of the Pakistan Navy's critical role within the framework of national security, including its ongoing contributions to Operation Bunyan Mursos, which reflects a sustained military focus on securing Pakistan's maritime interests. The briefing outlined how the navy's current engagements are not isolated efforts but part of a broader

strategy to defend the nation's sovereignty and maintain regional stability.

Meeting with officers and sailors, the Prime Minister acknowledged their professionalism and combat preparedness, praising their dedication to the defence of Pakistan's waters. His address conveyed strong support for the navy's operational excellence and its ability to respond effectively to any maritime threat. He also emphasized the navy's essential role in securing sea routes vital for trade and commerce, a reminder

of how intertwined national security and economic well-being have become in a world where maritime corridors are critical lifelines.

The Prime Minister's visit reinforced the public's confidence in the armed forces and their capabilities, highlighting a legacy of successful naval operations and the ongoing imperative to safeguard Pakistan's maritime sovereignty. At a time when regional tensions demand heightened vigilance, his message was unequivocal: Pakistan's naval defences remain alert, prepared, and resolute in protecting the nation's interests on the seas.

This visit, coming amid a backdrop of evolving security dynamics, signals a clear intent from the country's top leadership to ensure that the Pakistan Navy is well-equipped, strategically focused, and fully supported as it navigates the complex challenges of the maritime domain.

## ISPR reports killing of nine militants, loss of two soldiers

By ISPR/Asghar Ali Mubarak

RAWALPINDI: Security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have launched a series of operations targeting Indian-sponsored militants, resulting in the deaths of nine insurgents, the Pakistan Army's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) announced. The operations, carried out on May 17 and 18, underscore the ongoing efforts by Pakistan's military to combat cross-border terrorism and restore peace in the volatile region.

The operations saw fierce exchanges of fire, during which two security personnel were martyred. Their sacrifice has been honoured by the military, with the ISPR naming them as Sepoy Farhad Ali Turi, aged 29, hailing from District Kurram, and Lance Naik Sabir Afridi, aged 32, from District Kohat. Their loss has reinforced the resolve of the security forces to continue their mission against insurgent groups operating with external support.

In Lakki Marwat, a successful raid on a militant hideout led to the killing of five militants. Meanwhile, in Bannu, a separate operation resulted in two militants being neutralised. The situation escalated further in North Waziristan's Mir Ali area, where militants launched an attack on a convoy of security forces. Responding swiftly and decisively, the troops killed two terrorists linked to Indian support in retaliation.

The ISPR confirmed that clearance operations remain underway to flush out remaining militants from the area. These actions reflect the military's ongoing commitment to eliminate the threat posed by Indian-sponsored terrorism and maintain security along the sensitive border regions. The sacrifices of soldiers like Sepoy Farhad Ali Turi and Lance Naik Sabir Afridi serve as a poignant reminder of the human cost of this conflict, strengthening both public support and the military's determination to safeguard national sovereignty.

## Ceasefire with Pakistan not brokered by Trump, India clarifies

India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri sarcastically dismisses Trump's claim of intervention, says no permission was granted Trump to meddle and calls his claim mere self-promotion

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri has recently sought to clarify India's stance on the ceasefire between India and Pakistan, insisting it was purely a bilateral affair with no external mediation. Speaking to a parliamentary committee, Misri was explicit in rejecting claims made by former US President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly boasted about his role in brokering peace between the two neighbors.



India's Foreign Secretary dismissed Trump's assertions, describing them as unilateral attempts to insert himself into a delicate situation without India's consent. In his briefing, Misri emphasized that no permission was granted to Trump for any intervention, portraying the former president's claims as little more than self-promotion. By framing the ceasefire as an exclusively bilateral matter, India effectively avoids accountability and deflects attention from the unresolved grievances that continue to plague Kashmir.

Further, Misri down-

played concerns about nuclear threats from Pakistan during periods of heightened tension, insisting there was no evidence of any such signals from Islamabad. This claim attempts to cast the conflict in terms of conventional military engagement, steering the narrative away from the very real fears of escalation that the international community often highlights.

While India insists on its sole agency in achieving the ceasefire, the repeated public assertions by Trump — made on at least seven occasions — suggest a disconnect between political rhetoric and diplomatic realities. India's reluctance to acknowledge any role for outside mediation could be

interpreted as a reluctance to admit that its approach to Kashmir is deeply flawed and incapable of delivering lasting peace.

The Indian official dismissal of any external facilitation does not merely challenge Trump's narrative; it also reveals a persistent unwillingness on India's part to engage with international actors to trigger constructive approach to resolve Kashmir issue. Diplomatically, India has ditched Trump as he kept claiming that the ceasefire was brokered by him. The entire world stunned on India's attempt to insult Trump by denying any involvement of US or President Trump to reach the ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

## Modi could repeat such actions for face-saving: Fazl

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has warned that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, facing growing isolation at home, may once again resort to aggressive actions against Pakistan in a bid to save face.

Speaking during a session of the National Assembly, Fazlur Rehman said, "Members of India's own parliament are mocking the Modi government. He stands alone, without real public support. It wouldn't be surprising if he attempts something reckless again just to protect his image."

He criticized India's response to the recent Pahalgam incident, stating that New Delhi quickly blamed Pakistan without conducting any investigation. "India's military failure was turned into a false narrative of cross-border aggression. They fired missiles at our civilians and religious sites. This was unjustifiable," he said.

Fazlur Rehman lauded Pakistan's armed forces for their measured and effective response. "The way our military defended the nation will be remembered in history. I pay tribute to our forces. At this time, national unity must be our strength," he added.

Highlighting broader geopolitical shifts, the JUI-F leader pointed to China's increasing role in Pakistan's defence landscape. "China, which was our economic partner, is now standing with us in the defence sector. Their technology has proven superior to that of Europe and Israel. The world witnessed how our pilots used it effectively," he said.

## Finance minister stresses urgent need for institutional reforms

Finance Ministry Senator Aurangzeb described ongoing reforms as crucial for boosting institutional efficiency and transforming the business environment

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has reaffirmed the government's commitment to institutional restructuring and privatization, underscoring these reforms as central to Pakistan's economic recovery and growth strategy. Speaking in a virtual meeting with banking representatives from the United Arab Emirates, the finance minister highlighted the progress Pakistan has made in its financial sector and expressed optimism about strengthening bilateral co-operation.

The meeting, attended by representatives from banks across Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, and Ajman, provided a platform for dialogue on Pakistan's reform agenda and its implications for investors and international partners.

According to a statement issued by the Finance Ministry, Senator Aurangzeb described the ongoing reforms as essential steps to improve institutional efficiency and enhance the business environment.

He noted that Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio, currently hovering around



10.6 percent, is targeted to increase to 11 percent, reflecting efforts to broaden the tax base and improve revenue collection. The minister also stressed the government's push towards the full digitalization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), aiming to modernize tax administration and reduce leakages.

Senator Aurangzeb emphasized that Pakistan has met all the targets set under its International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan program, signalling fiscal discipline and commitment to structural reforms. He also mentioned the recent approval of \$1.3 billion in funding through the Resilience Sustainable Fund, describing it as a vital boost for Pakistan's economic resilience amid global uncertainties.

Highlighting a positive shift in market perception,

the finance minister pointed to the improvement in Pakistan's credit rating as a clear sign of growing investor confidence.

Among the reforms, he singled out the introduction of a tax on agricultural income as a historic achievement for Pakistan, reflecting efforts to bring previously untaxed sectors into the formal economy.

The discussion with UAE banking officials reflects Islamabad's broader strategy to attract foreign investment and deepen financial ties with key international partners.

As Pakistan navigates economic challenges, the government's focus on institutional reform, revenue enhancement, and strategic privatization remains pivotal to fostering sustainable growth and fiscal stability.

## Turkiye's offer on Kashmir welcomed

News Desk

BRUSSELS: Chairman of the Kashmir Council EU, Ali Raza Syed, has welcomed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's recent statement expressing Turkey's desire to play a constructive role in the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

President Erdoğan voiced this interest during a recent conversation with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, where he offered to mediate between New Delhi and Islamabad on the longstanding Kashmir issue.

## Child marriage banned in Islamabad after Senate nod

Nikah registrar barred from officiating marriages under 18, with violators facing jail and fines under new enforcement rules

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark move aimed at protecting children's rights and upholding human dignity, the Senate of Pakistan has passed legislation outlawing child marriage within the Islamabad Capital Territory. The bill, introduced by Senator Sherry Rehman, marks a decisive legislative step in aligning Pakistan's domestic law with international child protection standards, despite vocal opposition from conservative quarters.



Under the new law, any individual under the age of 18 is legally defined as a child, and marriage involving a minor is now a punishable offence. The legislation imposes a clear duty on Nikah registrars to verify the ages of both parties using NADRA-issued identity documents. Any registrar found officiating such a marriage will face up to one year in prison and a fine of Rs100,000.

The law goes further to hold adult men accountable for marrying minors. If a man over the age of 18 weds a girl underage, he could be sentenced to up to

three years of hard labour. In even more severe cases, where a child is forced into marriage, perpetrators may face up to seven years in prison and fines reaching Rs1 million.

Crucially, the legislation also criminalizes trafficking for the purpose of child marriage and makes facilitators—including parents and guardians—liable to prosecution, with penalties including imprisonment of up to three years. In an effort to expedite justice and prevent procedural delays, the law classifies these offences as non-bailable and mandates that trials be concluded within 90 days.

In a country where forced and underage marriages have often been glossed

over under the guise of tradition or familial duty, the bill asserts a bold redefinition of state responsibility. The inclusion of whistleblower protection signals a progressive outlook, aiming to encourage reporting while protecting informants who choose to remain anonymous.

However, not all senators welcomed the reform. The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) party registered its opposition by staging a walkout from the Senate, reflecting the deep societal divides and ideological resistance that still complicate child protection efforts in Pakistan. Despite this, the passage of the bill stands as a legislative assertion that the state can no longer turn a blind eye to child marriage.

## Putin praises Melania, claims Trump

News Desk

WASHINGTON: In an unusual moment during a White House ceremony, US President Donald Trump shared that Russian President Vladimir Putin holds First Lady Melania Trump in particularly high regard — perhaps, Trump added with a chuckle, even more than himself.

Speaking at the signing event for the "Take It Down Act" — a legislative push spearheaded by Melania to help remove explicit images and videos from social media — Trump told the audience, "President Putin told me that Russia respects Melania even more than it respects me."

## SU narrows VC search to three finalists

By Musarrat Arif

KARACHI: The University of Sindh, the second largest university in the province, has shortlisted three candidates for the position of vice chancellor. The frontrunners include Dr Fatah Muhammad Mari, vice-chancellor of Tando Jam Agricultural University; the current acting vice-chancellor Khalil-ur-Rehman Kumbati; and Dr Tariq Rahim Soomro, rector of the Institute of Management Sciences.

These names will be sent to intelligence agencies for clearance before the chief minister of Sindh interviews them and selects one for appointment. The interview process, overseen by HEC chairman Dr Tariq Rafi and spanning three days, in-



involved around 60 candidates from over 70 applicants. The search committee included key officials such as Sindh HEC secretary Moin Siddiqui, secretary boards and universities Abbas Baloch, secretary colleges Shahab Qamar Ansari, Dr Pirzada Qasim, and non-PhD member Suhail Akbar Shah.

Former vice-chancellor Sindh University, Dr Kalahoro, completed his four-

year term in January and was not granted a second term due to age restrictions, leaving the university without a permanent vice chancellor for over four months. Sindh remains the only province where the vice chancellor age limit is 62 years, while in other provinces, the federal government, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan, the limit is 65 years.

## Smuggled Balochistan artefacts returned to Pakistan

News Desk

PARIS: A valuable trove of archaeological artefacts smuggled out of Balochistan has been officially returned to Pakistan after being seized by French customs authorities, marking a significant step in the ongoing battle against the illicit trade of cultural heritage. Officials at the Pakistani Embassy in Paris confirmed that the ancient relics, which had been intercepted in France over recent years, were handed over under the framework of the 1970 UNESCO Convention that seeks to protect cultural property from illegal trafficking.

The artefacts, believed to include centuries-old items



of immense historical and cultural significance, had been taken from Balochistan—an area known for its rich archaeological landscape but also plagued by looting and smuggling. French authorities, acting on intelligence and routine checks, had impounded the items and initiated the legal

process required for their restitution. Following diplomatic coordination and compliance with international protocols, the objects were formally returned to the Pakistani mission.

The embassy has since made arrangements for the secure transfer of the artefacts back to Pakistan,

where they are expected to be placed under the care of heritage preservation authorities. Officials say the items will eventually be displayed in museums, offering the public a chance to reconnect with a lost part of the country's ancient past.

The handover is being seen as a win for cultural diplomacy and international cooperation, and comes as Pakistan continues to advocate for the return of artefacts taken illegally from its soil. The government has reiterated its commitment to safeguarding the nation's heritage and ensuring that stolen antiquities are not only recovered but also preserved for future generations.



# MQM-P raises alarm over federal tariff hike on Karachi industries

Experts warned that dismantling captive power plants risks halting Karachi’s industrial growth and endangering thousands of workers’ livelihoods

By our correspondent

KARACHI: A recent meeting held at the Governor House between Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leaders and federal ministers has brought to light rising tensions over proposed federal policies set to impact Karachi’s industrial sector. Sources close to the talks reveal that MQM-P voiced serious concerns about government plans to raise tariffs on captive power plants and to separate these plants from the industries they currently serve.

The party fears such measures could seriously disrupt industrial output, jeopardize employment, and harm Karachi’s export potential. MQM-P leaders ex-



pressed frustration over being sidelined in consultations on these pivotal decisions, stressing the need for their inclusion given their coalition role and the direct effect on their constituencies.

They warned that dismantling or detaching captive power plants would stall Karachi’s industrial growth and threaten the livelihoods

of countless workers who depend on these industries. Federal ministers countered by noting that the cabinet had already approved the captive power plant policy back in 2021, suggesting there was limited scope for reversing the decision.

On the topic of tax reforms, MQM-P representatives highlighted the contentious issue of agricultural

income taxation. While the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recommended taxing agricultural income, the federal government had deferred this to provincial governments. MQM-P expressed doubts that provinces would take meaningful action against powerful landlords and feudal interests, while hoping the upcoming budget would ease the tax burden on salaried individuals.

Despite these concerns, MQM-P remains cautiously optimistic about bringing agricultural income into the tax net in the future. The party also emphasized Karachi’s unique economic challenges, particularly those faced by traders, positioning itself as a key stakeholder in addressing the

city’s fiscal and developmental issues. They welcomed the government’s attempts to consult stakeholders ahead of the budget and pressed for increased funding for the Karachi-Hyderabad development package.

Among the priorities MQM-P underscored were vital projects such as the Karachi Circular Railway, the K-IV water supply scheme, and broader infrastructure rehabilitation in the city—initiatives seen as essential for Karachi’s growth and wellbeing. This meeting reflects ongoing negotiations as MQM-P and the federal government work to strike a delicate balance between national fiscal policies and safeguarding Karachi’s economic stability.

# Kh Asif rejects plan to bring no-confidence motion

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif issued a pointed message to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), stating that while the party is free to bring a no-confidence motion, they should reconsider, warning that doing so would only erode the limited political credibility they possess.

Speaking to the media, Asif asserted that such a move would reveal the opposition’s true political weakness and leave them politically exposed. He recalled the tenure of Asad Qaiser as Speaker for three and a half years, arguing that if there were genuine grounds for a no-confidence motion, it should have been brought against Qaiser multiple times during his term.

Asif suggested that Qaiser was merely following



orders from PTI’s founder, implying that the party now sought undue protection for their leader. Highlighting the current governance model, Khawaja Asif praised the so-called hybrid system, crediting its success to the cooperative relationship between the political government and the establishment over the last two and a half years.

The minister emphasized that this partnership has been instrumental in stabiliz-

ing Pakistan’s economy, which he claimed is receiving international recognition for its recovery. Reflecting on Pakistan’s history, Asif described 14 August 1947 as a profoundly blessed day marking the country’s independence and a symbolic victory over India. He also referenced Operation Bunyan Marsos, praising the armed forces’ unity and swift success, describing the nation as a “wall of steel.”

# KW&SC CEO job ad criticized for breaching age

By Aslam Shah

KARACHI: The advertisement for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) position at the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KW&SC) has sparked significant controversy following the unexplained reduction of the maximum age limit from 65 to 60 years. This move has been widely condemned as a blatant vio-

lation of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation Act, 2023.

Insiders assert that this is no mere clerical error but a deliberate strategy aimed at installing pre-approved candidates in this crucial role. According to Section 11(3) of the KW&SC Act, the CEO’s age must not exceed 65 years, and no provision allows for unilateral changes without formal approval from

the Sindh Assembly. Despite this, the recent advertisement—published extensively across newspapers—sets the age cap at 60, openly disregarding the legal framework. Sources within the corporation suggest the lowering of the age limit is intended to exclude retired, highly experienced professionals, effectively blocking dozens of eligible candidates.

# Bahar-e-Adab hosts evening dedicated to Maqbool Zaidi

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The Bahar-e-Adab literary society recently hosted a memorable and impactful gathering titled "An Evening Dedicated to Maqbool Zaidi" at the residence of Dr. Abdus Samad Noor Saharanpuri. The event was graced by

expressed heartfelt gratitude to the attendees and lauded Bahar-e-Adab’s efforts.

The formal poetry session featured renowned poets, including Sajid Rizvi, Syed Anwar Jawaid Hashmi, Akhtar Saeedi, and Maqbool Zaidi, while other poets, including Adnan Aks, Mahtab Alam



internationally acclaimed poet Sajid Rizvi and senior poet Syed Anwar Javed Hashmi, with noted poet Akhtar Saeedi as the guest of honor.

Poets such as Syed Anwar Javed Hashmi, Asi Sultani, Adnan Aks, Mahtab Alam Mahtab, Afzal Shah, Shariq Rashid, and Naeem Ansari paid poetic tribute to honoring Maqbool Zaidi’s literary legacy and personality. Dr. Noor Saharanpuri delivered a speech highlighting Zaidi’s significant literary contributions.

Later, Maqbool Zaidi

Mahtab, Asi Sultani, Alhaj Najmi, Khurram Asi Jahangiri, Afzal Shah, Afsar Ali Afsar, Naeem Ansari, Huma Saria, Dr. Atiya Hasan, Kishwar Urooj, Imad Alam Ashar, Mahmood Hassan Taban, Fahd Zai Toor, Adnan Zair, Asad Zafar, and Sehrish.

At conclusion, Bahar-e-Adab presented Maqbool Zaidi with a recognition shield. Sheh-nashin’s Huma Saria and Imad Alam Ashar honoured Zaidi with flowers and an Ajrak, and Qirtas-e-Adab’s Farukh Jafri and Ashar Alam offered a bouquet.

# JI chief commits to advancing Karachi’s civic projects

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Ameer Monem Zafar inaugurated several civic development projects in Gulberg Town on Sunday, including a new public park, a newly constructed street, high mast lights, and upgraded street lighting. Highlighting the party’s accomplishments over the past two years, Zafar emphasized JI’s commitment to improving Karachi’s infrastructure de-

budget, more than 7.6 million children remain out of school—a failure he attributed to the provincial government.

He outlined JI’s achievements, including the restoration of over 150 neglected parks and installation of tens of thousands of streetlights and paver blocks across various neighbourhoods. Zafar also highlighted innovative projects such as open-air gyms, model streets, roadside jungles, and localized



spite facing administrative and financial hurdles.

Addressing media and local residents, he praised the leadership of Hafiz Naeemur Rehman for fulfilling promises to serve the city beyond their official mandate. Zafar also visited a local “Learn and Teach” camp, an educational support initiative, where he expressed concern over Sindh’s education crisis, pointing out that despite a Rs454 billion education

sewerage and road carpeting, all carried out using town-level funds due to a lack of city government action.

The event was attended by party leaders Kamran Siraj, Tariq Mujtiba, Nusratullah Khan, and others, with residents welcoming Zafar with rose petals and fireworks. Zafar called on citizens to support JI’s ongoing development efforts, promising continued progress in urban infrastructure and community welfare.

## METRO MATTERS

### KMC Council passes 14 resolutions in key session chaired by Mayor Wahab

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) passed 14 important resolutions on Monday during a general council session chaired by Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab. He was joined by Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad and Municipal Commissioner Syed Mohammad Afzal Zaidi.

The session focused on public interest measures, administrative reforms, and national solidarity. These included a resolution lauding the Pakistan Army for the success of Operation Bunyad-ul-Marsous and approval to determine the number of KMC committees. Authority to issue trade licences was delegated to Union Committees, bringing services closer to citizens. The council also resolved to address the long-standing land dispute in Railway Quarters involving KMC and K-Electric.

Fines were approved for illegal car washing in front of commercial centres and unauthorised water usage in nurseries, while the Enterprise and Investment Promotion Department’s imprest account limit was raised to improve operational efficiency. Charges for lab tests at KMC-run hospitals were revised upwards.

In Orangi Township, a plot was divided with part assigned to Pakistan Post and the remainder designated for auction or a public-private partnership (PPP). Approval was given to accept open market bids for auction items with no prior bids from the Stores Department. Taxes will now be collected from wedding lawns, banquet halls, and ballrooms outside cantonment areas.

Successful bidders in Orangi Township’s commercial plot auction were formally accepted, and KMC abattoirs will now operate under a PPP model. Park management will be overhauled to function through rental or PPP models aimed at improving public facilities. The council also passed a resolution condemning illegal actions and aggression by India.

The meeting reflected KMC’s broader focus on improving governance, enhancing municipal revenue, and reinforcing alignment with national policies. Mayor Wahab highlighted the importance of citizen-focused reforms and institutional transparency as the council concluded its session.

### Traffic safety seminar urges action to curb Karachi road accidents

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: The Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi’s Medical and Social Welfare Committee hosted a seminar titled “Traffic, Accidents, Causes and Prevention” at Haseena Moin Hall, drawing attention to the growing toll of road accidents and the urgent need for preventive measures.

DIG Traffic Syed Pir Muhammad Shah presented grim statistics, noting that 1.3 million people die in road accidents globally each year, with a fatality every two and a half minutes. In Karachi, he cited speeding, poor vehicle conditions, overloading, and a lack of lane discipline as major contributors. Shockingly, motorcyclists account for 55% of accident victims.

Advisor to the Governor Sindh, Tariq Mustafa, underscored shared civic responsibility in adhering to traffic rules, stating that government alone cannot change outcomes without public participation. Dr. Qaiser Sajjad lamented public disregard for safety, including signal violations and underage driving. He linked reckless behavior to increased hospitalization and family tragedies, calling for a shift in public mindset towards compliance and caution.

Dr. Irfan Siddiqui recommended dedicated roads for heavy vehicles, while Dr. Sabir Memon revealed that a large share of the health budget is consumed by accident-related cases—resources that could otherwise address other diseases. The seminar brought together medical professionals, traffic authorities, civil society representatives, and political figures, all echoing the urgent need for road safety reforms, infrastructure upgrades, and widespread public awareness.

### Sindh declares public holiday for Youm-e-Takbeer

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The Sindh government has declared a public holiday on Wednesday, 28 May, in observance of Youm-e-Takbeer, marking a significant day of national pride and remembrance. An official notification has confirmed that all government and private institutions across the province will remain closed for the day.

Youm-e-Takbeer commemorates Pakistan’s historic achievement in successfully conducting nuclear tests in 1998, a moment that cemented the country’s position as a nuclear power. The day holds deep significance for many Pakistanis, symbolising resilience and national strength.

The announcement of the holiday ensures that citizens have the opportunity to participate in official ceremonies, educational events, and patriotic activities planned to mark this important occasion. By closing institutions, the government aims to allow wider public engagement and reflection on the country’s strategic achievements.

This move also reflects the province’s alignment with national observances, reinforcing the collective spirit of unity and pride in Pakistan’s defence and scientific milestones. As the day approaches, preparations are expected to be underway to celebrate Youm-e-Takbeer with due honour and enthusiasm across Sindh.

### KU awards 25 PhDs, 45 MPhils

By our correspondent

KARACHI: In its latest meeting, the Advanced Studies and Research Board (ASRB) of the University of Karachi, chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi, approved the conferment of 25 PhD and 45 MPhil degrees, as well as one DSc and one MS degree. According to the university registrar, Prof Dr Muhammad Raza Shah was awarded a DSc in Chemistry.

The PhD recipients include Feroz Khan (Biochemistry), Javed Akram (Botany, ISHU), Wajiha Aslam (Business Administration), Irfan Ali (Chemistry), Daim Asif Raja, Lubna Atta, Nimra Naveed Sheikh, Anila Fayyaz, Shaukat Wali (Chemistry, HEJ), Fawad Hussain Paul (Economics), Sobia Irfan Butt, Lalarkh Khurshid (International Relations), Samreen Zahra (Islamic Studies), Naeem Mahmood (Law), M. Atif Idrees (Mathematics), Muhammad Arsalan, Sarah Naqvi (Pharmacognosy), Shahid Ali, Abdullah (Pharmacology), Quratul Ain (Physiology), Asim Mehboob (Public Administration), Aamir Waheed Khawaja (Social Work), Anthony Gabriel, Shamsa Sabah (Urdu), and Owais Anwar (Usuluddin).

MPhil degrees were awarded to students in a wide range of disciplines, including Maryam Zahra (Applied Economics), Atufa Shabbir, Sana Farooq (Biochemistry), Sana Riaz (Biotechnology), Musaddiq Manzoor (Botany), Syed Ali Najaf Zaidi (Business Administration), Yamna Khan, Muhammad Ammar Ayooobi (Chemistry, HEJ), Dir-e-Shehwar Hasan, Farheen Shaheen (Clinical Psychology), Kiran Azeem, Faiza Qamar (Commerce), Faisal Ilyas (Criminology), Yasra Rahman (Geology), Nashman Khatri (Institute of Space Science and Technology), Saleemullah, Muhammad Qasim Saeed, Shireen Hashim (International Relations), Muhammad Bilal Tahir (Islamic Studies), Hareem Abdullah (KIBGE), Umama Abdul Razzaq (Microbiology), Ayesha Siddiq, Nimra Muzaffar Sultan (Molecular Medicine, PMDC), Hadiya Tauseef (Molecular Medicine, ICCBS), Asma Altaf, Asma Irfan (Pharmaceutics), Wardah Fatima (Pharmacology), Ahmad Mujtaba (Pharmacy Practice), Shehzad Ahmed Khan, Asma Khan (Psychology), Muniba Gul (Physiology), Muhammad Iqbal, Naveed Khan, Muhammad Saqibuddin, Naveed Iqbal (Public Administration), Hafiz Usman Safdar (Quran and Sunnah), Abdul Rahim (Space Science and Technology), Abdul Muhaimin, Ruby Daud, Muhammad Zohaib, Muhammad Saad Shabbir, Muhammad Akmal, Muhammad Uzair Siddiqui (Usuluddin), Saba Javed and Safia Siddiqui (Zoology). Ujala Khalid was awarded an MS degree in European Studies after completing 30 credit hours of coursework.

### Saleem Zia attends wedding of colleague’s sons

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Senior leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Saleem Zia participated in the wedding ceremony of the sons of former Chairman Mohibullah Khan, in a well-attended event that brought together political figures, family, and well-wishers.

Among the distinguished guests were former Provincial Law Minister and Senator Saleem Zia, PML-N Sindh President Bashir Ahmed Memon, veteran political leader Lala Mir Hassan, PML-N Sindh General Secretary Haji Parvez Tanoli, Karachi Division President Salman Khan Bakht Hussain, Karachi Division Vice President Qazi Zahid Hussain Naqshbandi, Senior Vice President of District South Sardar Aslam Gabol, senior party leader Hanif Khan, PML-N leader Sardar Tariq Kashmiri, and Social Media Coordinator Noor Qureshi.

The ceremony was also attended by other party office-bearers, close relatives, and friends of the family. The presence of prominent political figures highlighted the continued unity and camaraderie within the ranks of PML-N leadership.

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# Kashmir pleads for global attention

There are few conflicts in the world as persistently ignored and as perilously flammable as the one that continues to burn quietly in the Kashmir Valley. Once described as paradise on Earth, Kashmir has for decades been a theatre of intense military occupation, civilian suffering, and a gross defiance of international law — a reality the global community has too often sidestepped for diplomatic convenience. At the heart of the matter is the Indian illegal-occupation of Jammu and Kashmir, a situation that persists not only as a political flash-point but as a profound human tragedy. Türkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has once again attracted international attention on the issue by offering to mediate between India and Pakistan. His remarks came after detailed discussions with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, where he reportedly delved deeply into the Kashmir question. Erdoğan's tone was measured, diplomatic yet unmistakably clear. He called for a resolution based on human rights and encouraged international organizations i.e. UN to play a constructive role.

His words, while familiar to those following Türkiye's consistent support for Pakistan on the matter, serve as a necessary reminder that Kashmir remains unresolved — not just as a border dispute, but as a humanitarian emergency. Though RSS-trained Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, however, has refused to accept any such suggestions though Indian occupied forces not only carry out ethnic cleansing but also try to change the demography of Indian Illegally-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The silence from New Delhi is deafening as to over international voices raise in favor to resolve the issue according to UN charter. Since the unilateral revocation of Article 370 in 2019, which stripped Jammu and Kashmir of its semi-autonomous status, India has taken an increasingly headline approach. This has included an extended communications blackout, mass detentions without trial, and the presence of hundreds of thousands of armed forces on the ground.

Any international mediation is flatly rejected by India, which insists — with growing authoritarian zeal — that Kashmir is an "internal matter," despite a strong dissent voices even raised within IIOJK. This position does not align with the history of the conflict, nor with the commitments India itself once made. Kashmir is not merely a regional squabble. It is an internationally recognised dispute, acknowledged by the United Nations through a series of resolutions, beginning in 1948. These resolutions called for a plebiscite to allow the people of Kashmir to determine their own future — a promise that remains unfulfilled to this day. The reality on the ground now looks nothing like a democracy. It looks like occupation. More than 700,000 Indian troops — an overwhelming force — patrol the valley, making it one of the most militarised zones in the world. Allegations of human rights abuses, including arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and sexual violence, have been documented by credible international organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

And yet, international response remains painfully muted. The West's strategic interests in India — from trade to counterbalancing China's influence — have pushed Kashmir to the periphery of global diplomatic concern. When Erdoğan speaks of a human-rights based resolution, he echoes what many in the valley cry for: recognition. Acknowledgement that their lives matter, that their suffering is real, and that their voices must be heard. Pakistan, meanwhile, continues to advocate for a solution rooted in international legality and self-determination. Islamabad's position has remained largely consistent: that Kashmir is a disputed territory whose people must be given the right to decide their future through a free and impartial plebiscite under UN auspices. Critics may dismiss Pakistan's stance as politically motivated, yet the moral clarity of supporting a long-promised democratic process should not be overshadowed by geopolitical cynicism.

The international community cannot afford to treat the Kashmir conflict as a frozen relic of the post-colonial era. The stakes are simply too high. The threat of escalation between two nuclear-armed neighbors is real and terrifying. Skirmishes along the Line of Control are a near-daily occurrence, and the rhetoric from both sides can swiftly descend into dangerous brinkmanship. Beyond the geopolitical calculus, however, lie millions of Kashmiri civilians — men, women, and children — caught in a storm of violence and disenfranchisement. Their lives have been marked by curfews, gunfire, surveillance, and the constant threat of arrest. Their stories, like their futures, remain hostage to a conflict they did not create. What Erdoğan proposes — a diplomatic mediation grounded in human rights — is not radical. It is, in fact, deeply reasonable. It is the bare minimum that should be expected from a world order that claims to cherish liberty and peace. It is telling that such a call must come not from traditional Western powers, but from a country like Turkey, whose own democratic record may be uneven, but whose moral compass on Kashmir appears to be intact.

The role of the international community, particularly the West, must now be to listen — not to New Delhi's selective narratives or Pakistan's historical frustrations, but to the people of Kashmir themselves.

They must not be relegated to mere subjects of political chess. They are citizens with rights, with histories, with voices that deserve to be heard in the halls of diplomacy, not silenced behind concertina wire. The idea that a democratic state can indefinitely suppress an entire population's right to self-determination is not just untenable — it is antithetical to the values India claims to uphold. India may aspire to be the world's largest democracy, but in Kashmir, it acts with impunity reminiscent of colonial rule. A country cannot claim moral leadership while bulldozing the democratic will of an entire region. It is time for a reckoning. Time for the United Nations to reassert its authority. Time for democratic nations to speak not just for strategic alliances, but for justice. Time to hold India accountable to the promises it once made and the international laws it continues to breach.

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

By Uzma Ehtasham



It is no small thing to say that Donald Trump has managed to surprise the world. The man once known for his unfiltered tweets and swaggering belligerence is now donning the hat of a statesman. Since his return to the White House four months ago, the transformation has been both improbable and profound. Trump, who once made headlines for alienating allies and antagonizing adversaries, is now calling for calm, urging restraint, and — perhaps most astonishingly — offering himself as a broker of peace in one of the most volatile corners of the world: South Asia. Gone is the combative rhetoric of his first term, replaced now by a language that, while still characteristically blunt, leans more toward diplomacy than demagoguery. His new foreign policy approach seems to center on one simple proposition: that trade, not war, is the path to prosperity.

It is a message he has repeated across recent engagements — whether it be in his decision to lift sanctions on Syria, initiate long-stalled dialogue with Iran, or reinvestigate efforts to halt the grinding war in Ukraine. But it is in South Asia where this new Trump doctrine is being tested most

acutely. Tensions between India and Pakistan are nothing new. The two nuclear-armed neighbors have lived with the threat of war since their violent partition in 1947, and the Kashmir dispute has been the enduring fault line. In April 2025, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi cited the 2019 Pulwama incident once more — curiously, and some would say cynically — as a pretext to threaten Pakistan and suspend the vital Indus Waters Treaty. Pakistan, for its part, called for restraint, offered investigations, and sought dialogue. But where Islamabad extended a hand, New Delhi saw only an opening for provocation.

Then, on May 7, the conflict took a deadly turn. Indian missile strikes on Pakistani civilian areas left 26 dead and dozens wounded, with mosques damaged and homes flattened. It was a shocking escalation, and it marked a return to the dangerous brinkmanship of past years. But Pakistan's response — though forceful — was measured. Six Indian fighter jets were downed. Drone incursions were intercepted. And when India struck Pakistan's Noor Khan Air Base on May 8, Islamabad launched a focused, surgical retaliation that crippled key Indian air assets. In times past, this might have been the beginning of yet another destructive war. But not this time. Enter Trump, wielding neither a sword nor a Twitter tirade, but a ceasefire proposal. His

intervention came just in time.

Calling both sides to the table, he spoke in unusually sober terms about the devastating consequences a war between India and Pakistan could bring — not just for the region, but for the world. Trump's diplomacy was fast, firm, and uncharacteristically thoughtful. His televised address, made after a whirlwind tour of Arab capitals, revealed a side of the American president that few had seen before. He did not talk of winning or domination, but of mutual survival, economic cooperation, and opportunity. He lauded Pakistan's industrious people, their resilience, and their technical skill. He questioned why Washington's trade with Islamabad remains negligible, despite decades of cooperation. It was a recognition long overdue, and warmly received in Pakistan.

This, then, may be a rare moment in South Asian diplomacy — a fleeting window through which peace might just peek. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has made it clear that Pakistan is ready for dialogue, that it wants resolution, not escalation.

But the problem, as ever, lies in New Delhi. Modi's government continues to mistake diplomacy for weakness, and peace offerings for surrender. The Indian leadership's muscular nationalism leaves little room for compromise, let alone reconciliation. Yet Trump's re-engagement offers

something different: validation. His mediation is not merely symbolic; it is a public acknowledgment that Pakistan's calls for peace are neither naive nor hollow. They are grounded in a pragmatic understanding of what the region truly needs — stability, cooperation, and development.

But there is a hard truth that even Trump, for all his renewed enthusiasm for diplomacy, cannot ignore: without Kashmir, all roads to peace will lead nowhere. The unresolved status of Kashmir is the poisoned root from which conflict repeatedly sprouts. No ceasefire, no trade agreement, and no well-meaning American overture can succeed unless the people of Kashmir are given a voice and a just settlement is pursued in earnest. That is the test now. Trump may have helped pull the region back from the edge, but whether he can help steer it toward lasting peace depends on how seriously he treats the core issues. Will he press both sides, especially India, to return to meaningful dialogue on Kashmir? Or will his interest, like that of so many Western leaders before him, fade with the next global crisis?

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By Atiq Raja



Love is arguably the most exalted of human emotions. It has inspired sonnets, stirred revolutions, and provided the very foundation for countless films, songs, and novels. From Shakespeare to Sade, we have been told to believe in its grand gestures, its chaos, its consuming nature. But strip away the glitter and the poetry, and we must ask ourselves: what happens when love stops being a source of growth and becomes a form of quiet suffering? The uncomfortable truth is this—love can turn into something deeply unkind, not because love itself is cruel, but because what we often call love is, in fact, a collection of unmet needs, unresolved traumas, and misplaced hopes.

There's a common, unspoken narrative that glorifies staying, enduring, or fighting for love, even when it chips away at one's self-worth. This isn't romantic. It's tragic.

At the heart of genuine love lies freedom. Not the flighty kind that slips away at the first sign of difficulty, but the freedom that allows both people to grow individually and to-

gether. Love should never ask you to beg. It should not demand that you silence your voice or squeeze yourself into a version of who you think you need to be in order to be enough. When love starts to feel like captivity, when it becomes synonymous with anxiety, insecurity, or emotional begging, then it has strayed far from its true nature. Desperation is not a declaration of love—it is a manifestation of fear. And fear has no place in a relationship built on respect and mutual affection. Fear of being alone, fear of losing someone, fear of not being worthy—these emotions often drive us to cling tighter, to compromise more, to stay longer than we should.

But the result isn't closeness; it's depletion. It isn't intimacy; it's imbalance. A love worth keeping is one that does not ask for your dignity as part of the bargain. It does not require you to trade your self-respect for companionship. And yet, many continue to do exactly that, mistaking suffering for loyalty, and control for care. There is nothing admirable about tolerating humiliation or consistent disregard under the guise of "sticking it out." Real love does not come with conditions that erode your sense of self. The old saying goes that love is blind. But perhaps what is blind is not love itself, but

the way we sometimes pursue it. We are often drawn to those who reflect our internal doubts back to us, who challenge us not in ways that help us grow, but in ways that keep us small. We chase love from those who are unwilling to give it freely, believing that if we just try a little harder, change a little more, we might finally be enough.

But love should not be an achievement. It should not feel like a race you're running alone while someone else remains still. A healthy relationship is an act of mutual choosing. It does not require constant persuasion. If you find yourself always initiating conversations, always making plans, always fixing what's broken while the other barely acknowledges the cracks—then you are not in a partnership. You are in pursuit. And love, when real, should not be a chase. It should be a meeting point. We all have wounds. We all carry histories that shape how we give and receive love. But there is a fundamental difference between healing with someone and bleeding for someone. If your relationship drains you more than it fills you, if it leaves you questioning your worth more than affirming it, then it is not love. It is emotional harm wearing the mask of intimacy.

Self-love is not a cliché; it is a necessity.

By Dr Naazir Mahmood

Murli and Pushpa are doctors, friends, spouses, poets, and, most of all, teachers of medical sciences. They belong to a rare breed of Pakistanis free from all monetary pursuits, prejudices and pride. They could have earned millions, but preferred to live in the same two-room flat for nearly four decades.

I have known them since the 1980s when they had just completed their medical education and had the option of embarking on a journey of private practice that could transform their material condition within years, with the possibility of living in a posh area, boasting a plush bungalow and driving a luxury car. They preferred to drive an 800cc car for years and never started their private practice to supplement their meagre salaries from the government hospitals where they worked.

Dr Murli Dhar — from Jacobabad — is now one of the most prominent urologists working for the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplant (SIUT) for nearly 40 years. Dr Pushpa Vallabh — from Mithi in Thar — wrote her first poem at the age of 13 when she was still in middle school. She did her MBBS at the Peoples Medical College, Nawabshah, where she edited the college magazine 'Marui'. She obtained her MPhil in microbiology from the University of Karachi, and having taught at Dow Medical University for years, she specialised in medical genetics to pursue her PhD.

She is a pathologist and teacher of pathological sciences with a keen interest in literature that she inherited from her father Vall Ram Vallabh, a renowned fiction writer and translator with dozens of books to his credit. Pushpa kept writing poetry during her medical education. Her first collection of Sindhi poetry received the Shaikh Ayaz Award from Sindhi Adabi Sangat in 1985 when she was just 22 years old. She caught the attention of translators who started re-

dering her verses into English and Urdu. 'Bund Akhiun Mein Aasman' (The Sky in Eyes Shut) — published by Marvi Publication Karachi — appeared in 2010. Her collections of poetry established her credentials as a Sindhi poet of considerable repute. Her poetry reflected her early life in Thar, where she spent her childhood.

To date, her three poetry collections have adorned the shelves of Sindhi poetry lovers. Her latest collection 'Gul Mohr ji Mausam' (The season of the Gulmohr), which Koonj Academy Karachi published in 2023, contains poems more resonant of her recent experiences and observations. Sindhi prose poems have traversed a long journey from Sobhiraaj Nirmaldas Faani in 1937 to Shaikh Ayaz and Narayan Shayam to Pushpa Vallabh in the 21st century. Pushpa's poems, such as Jilawatan (The exiled), Tasveer (Photograph), Aaeeno (Mirror) and Bazigur (Juggler) are some of the examples of her best prose poems.

Dr Murli Dhar and Pushpa tied the knot in 1988 and formed a formidable couple that complemented each other in their literary and medical pursuits. Both belonged to Sindh's progressive intellectual landscape, with their families dedicated to the development and welfare of people regardless of cast and creed. When Dr Jabbar Khattak — another progressive activist and intellectual who spent years in jail during the dictatorship of General Ziaul Haq — launched Sindhi language newspaper 'Awami Awaz' (People's Voice), Dr Murli Dhar started contributing his articles and write-ups on health problems and literary issues.

Murli also had almost the same background of his own literary cum medical pursuits as his wife Pushpa. During his college days, he edited college magazines and special numbers on various topics. In 1983, while studying at the Chandka Medical College, Murli and his friends compiled and edited a special issue on Diyari (Diwali in Urdu). After nearly 34 years, Dr Murli man-

aged to get that issue reprinted in book form, published by the Mohenjo Daro Publishing Agency, Larkana in 2017.

'Diyari — Shabari ja chakhyaal jootha phal' (Diwali — the fruits that Shabari tasted) is an interesting collection of articles and essays by some of the most prominent writers in Sindhi. Shabari is a lower-caste untouchable Hindu woman working as a cleaner at an ashram (hermitage or monastery). Shabari's guru, Matunga, informed her that one day, Shri Ram would visit her. She kept waiting, and Ramchandar, while looking for Sita accidentally meets Shabari who gives him some fruit that she had already tasted. According to tradition, Ram's brother Lachman frowned but Ram explained that lower or upper castes don't matter; love is all that counts.

Ram ate the same fruit and refused to entertain any thoughts about untouchability and maintained the supremacy of humanity. The book contains articles by Comrade Sobho Gyanchandani, Allama I I Qazi, and Popti Heranandani, which Dr Murli Dhar translated from English to Sindhi. Dr Fehmida Hussain, M A Pathan, Rochiraam and Shayam Kumar also wrote interesting essays for the special issue on Diwali.

In 2018, Dr Murli Dhar's collection of poetry 'Kirchiyun Kirchiyun Udma' was published, which Prof M H Solangi translated into English as 'Broken Emotions'. Reading Murli's verses, one can clearly see the healer who uses not only medicines but also poetry for the magic of healing. His therapy revolves around the effective use of words that can alleviate the miseries of his patients. Most of his poems carry a certain message that — if understood clearly — can reduce the pain of humanity. Murli employs simple diction that pierces through the minds of his readers as his scalpel removes the malignant parts from his patients' bodies.

Reading his poetry, one could feel that Murli is not an ordinary doctor; he tries to be the healer of body, mind and soul. While

highlighting social issues, he also reflects on the mental and psychological state of his patients. He doesn't offer simple solutions; rather, he asks his readers to ponder their own possibilities to change their plight. His concern for marginalised communities is evident from all his writings, as he highlights inequality and lack of justice in society as the primary causes for poverty and the prevalence of diseases.

Then in 2021, Dr Murli Dhar brought out a compendium about the coronavirus and the resultant pandemic. He wrote a 130-page book cautioning against the lack of seriousness about the deadly virus in society. Murli himself — like thousands of other doctors and paramedical staff — risked his life while treating the patients suffering from Covid-19. The book offers, in simple language, nearly all the necessary precautions that individuals and society must take while fighting against the pandemic.

Dr Murli's other major contribution is his series of books in Sindhi and Urdu titled 'Sehat Sabhi Laye' or 'Sehat Sab Ke Liye' in Urdu, which translates as 'Health For All'. A set of three books has been published in both Sindhi and Urdu, making them a unique collection of writings on health in simple language. Zulfiqar Rajpar beautifully translated the Sindhi books into Urdu, and one can hardly feel that they are translations. These books cover a wide spectrum of health issues, ranging from the coronavirus to the history of pandemics and from his appreciation for the medical staff to the common ailments and diseases of the kidneys.

He has also written about fistula, the intricacies of organ transplant, Chikungunya, constipation, asthma, bird flu, dengue, TB, measles, breast cancer, naegleria, Ebola, HIV, and many other issues that plague human societies around the world but people in countries such as Pakistan seldom get adequate guidance about them in vernacular. Doctors Murli and Pushpa are role models for the young doctors in this country, who appear to be more concerned about their personal gains rather than cultivating empathy for the suffering segments of society.

By Nadeem Mumtaz Qureshi

There are two types of terrorism in Indian-Occupied Kashmir. By far, the greater terror is that of the Indian occupying army. There are half a million soldiers in Kashmir oppressing and terrorising a population of eight million people — one Indian soldier for every 16 Kashmiris. This may be the highest soldier-to-population proportion in any region in the world.

The lesser terror is that of the handful of Kashmiri resistance fighters. This resistance has been begat by the greater terror. Were there no greater terror, there would be no lesser terror.

India's desperate attempts to characterise the Kashmiri resistance as adventitious are spurious. It is intended to distract attention from the brutal suppression the Kashmiri people have suffered at India's hands for the better part of 80 years.

This Kashmiri resistance is a purely indigenous movement. Of course, not all

# A tale of two terrors

their actions are defensible: the taking of innocent life is to be condemned no matter who the perpetrator — India's army of occupation or the Kashmiri resistance.

But it is Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi who, by rewriting India's constitution, has stoked the resistance in Kashmir. He alone is responsible for the loss of all innocent life and all terror in Kashmir.

Now that he has been wounded and deeply embarrassed by Pakistan's Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, he would be wise to pull his forces out of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and allow the people of those benighted territories to exercise their right of self-determination as required by the UNCIP resolution of 1949 — a resolution to which India was a party.

Following India's unambiguous slap down by Pakistan in the military domain, Indian policy seems to have returned to

its customary skullduggery: Exploiting perceived schisms in Pakistan. The Indian media, after the slap down, is flooded with talk of separatist movements in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

But Sri Modi would do well to worry more about his own backyard: The facade of Indian invincibility and power has crashed to the ground. Indigenous separatist movements such as those in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, the north-eastern states such as Mizoram and Nagaland, the Red Corridor States such as Chhattisgarh and Telangana have been emboldened. They now realise that what they thought to be a tiger is really a toothless lion.

Sadly, Sri Modi remains a real and present danger not so much to Pakistan, but rather to the Indian nation, its integrity, solidarity and sovereignty. His ex-

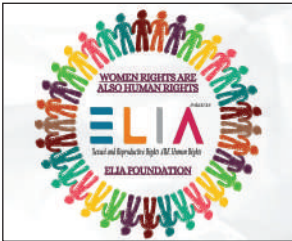
tremist Hindutva beliefs have shattered the golden principles of secularism and equal rights for all on which the Indian state was founded.

Pakistan's military defeat of India is likely to have political implications in both countries. In India, Sri Modi's image and stature have been severely damaged. He has gratuitously embarrassed the Indian people as no Indian leader in history has ever done before. His days in the political limelight may be nearing an end.

In Pakistan, the image of the military establishment has been hugely tarnished by its success in embarrassing India. An image tarnished of late at the hands of the supporters of the ameerul momeen currently ensconced in jail.

But the military's performance has changed all that. The ameer himself is starting to fade from memory as Pakistanis discover a new love for and pride in their military. Unknowingly and inadvertently, Sri Modi has unified Pakistanis as never before. We may yet turn out to be his worst nightmare.





## Pakistan, India agree to revert military positions

The third reported dialogue between military commanders since the ceasefire signals a mutual commitment to stabilizing tensions along the disputed border

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India military officials have taken a significant step towards easing tensions along the Line of Control (LoC) by establishing contact aimed at coordinating a return to normal peacetime positions. According to sources close to the development, this renewed communication between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of both countries marks progress in the fragile ceasefire that has held between the nuclear-armed neighbors, despite recent escalations sparked by Indian aggression.

The dialogue between the military commanders, reportedly the third such exchange since the ceasefire was reaffirmed, reflects a shared recognition of the need to stabilize the situation



along the disputed border. Both sides discussed the current ground realities and reiterated their commitment to upholding the truce, suggesting a cautious but hopeful atmosphere after a period of heightened alert and confrontation.

For months, forces on both sides have remained on edge, facing each other in tense standoffs. The recent efforts to return troops to traditional peace-time deployments are being seen by an-

alysts and insiders alike as a crucial confidence-building measure.

Such steps are often necessary preludes to broader diplomatic engagement and can reduce the risk of misunderstandings that might otherwise trigger further violence.

While neither Pakistan nor India has issued an official statement about these developments, those familiar with the talks describe the tone as "positive" and high-

light the emphasis both sides have placed on restraint. The use of the DGMOs' communication channel, a well-established backchannel that has historically helped to prevent isolated border incidents from escalating into full-scale conflict, underlines the continuing importance of dialogue even amid periods of tension.

This latest move offers a cautious note of optimism for a region long haunted by hostility and mistrust. The gradual easing of military postures along the LoC could pave the way for a more stable security environment, giving diplomatic efforts a better chance to succeed. As both sides tentatively take steps toward peace, observers will watch closely to see if this momentum can be sustained and translated into lasting progress.

## Forced conversion of Hindu girl in Sukkur sparks outrage

By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: Human rights defenders and members of Pakistan's Hindu community have strongly condemned the abduction and forced conversion of a 15-year-old Hindu girl in Sukkur, describing it as a harrowing example of growing intolerance and institutional failure to protect minorities.

Sanhiya Meghwar, a ninth-grade student from Sahib Khan Jiskani village in Rohri Taluka, District Sukkur, was reportedly abducted and forcibly converted. Despite an FIR being filed at Jhangro Police Station and repeated appeals to the SSP Sukkur and SHO Pirouz Shar, no progress has been made in recovering the minor. Activists say the continued inaction of law enforcement agencies is emboldening perpetrators who manipulate religion for personal or political gain.

Local leaders including Mukhi Dadan Arshi, Mukhi Babu Hardas, Mukhi Daryano Mal, Mukhi Heer-anand, and Councillor Ameet Kumar have issued a collective condemnation of the incident. They demand the immediate recovery of Sanhiya, the arrest of clerics and facilitators involved, and legal action against police officials who failed in their duties.

"The continued targeting of Hindu girls has created an atmosphere of fear," the community leaders said. "Minorities are losing trust in the justice system." They stressed the incident is not isolated but reflects a wider pattern of religious persecution, where minority families live in fear, their daughters vulnerable to exploitation, and their pleas for justice unanswered.

Particular concern was raised over the role of certain clerics accused of coercing conversions under the guise of religious practice. Such actions, the community leaders noted, stand in stark contradiction to Islamic principles of justice, peace, and protection of the oppressed.

## Bangladesh's tour under cloud

By our correspondent

LAHORE: The Bangladesh cricket team's scheduled tour to Pakistan appears to be in doubt, as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has yet to confirm whether it will send its players for the series starting on 21 May. According to sources close to the matter, the BCB remains indecisive over the tour, which was expected to feature several matches as part of a bilateral cricketing exchange.

Despite the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) offering multiple options to accommodate the tour, the BCB has not responded formally to any of the proposals. The uncertainty has raised serious concerns within cricketing circles in both countries.

## PM orders forensic audit of tax litigation

The prime minister warned that officials advancing weak or flawed cases without solid evidence will face strict disciplinary action

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has taken a firm stance on tax litigation, ordering a comprehensive forensic audit of all tax-related cases to root out weaknesses and ensure accountability within the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). His directive came during a high-level review meeting focused on the FBR's performance and the growing backlog of pending tax disputes.

Highlighting the urgent need to clear the mounting cases, the prime minister stressed that officials who push forward weak or flawed cases without solid grounds will face strict disciplinary action. "All tax cases must be resolved at the earliest. The services of reputable lawyers should be engaged for tax litigation," he said, according to an official statement. This approach reflects an effort to raise the standards of litigation and restore public confidence in the tax system.

Sharif acknowledged the ongoing reforms underway within the FBR and expressed optimism about the progress so far. "Alhamdulillah, we are witnessing



positive results from the ongoing reforms in FBR," he noted, signaling government resolve to overhaul tax administration and improve efficiency. The prime minister emphasized that accountability must be balanced with encouragement, calling for rewards for those officials who demonstrate integrity and diligence in pursuing merit-based cases.

A briefing provided to the prime minister revealed the scale of the challenge: between July and December 2024, 586 cases were disposed of in the High Court and 637 in the Supreme Court. Yet a staggering 33,522 cases remain pending across various courts and tribunals, involving an estimated Rs 4.7 trillion in disputed amounts. The backlog not only ham-

pers revenue collection but also undermines the credibility of the tax system.

To address this, Shehbaz Sharif ordered an immediate acceleration of efforts to resolve pending cases, underscoring the government's commitment to streamlining the tax adjudication process.

His firm message aims to ensure that the tax system works fairly and efficiently, without unnecessary delays or misuse of the legal process.

This renewed focus on tax litigation signals the prime minister's broader ambition to strengthen Pakistan's financial governance and improve the ease of doing business, with hopes that clearing these disputes will contribute to a healthier economy and greater fiscal stability.

## Three terrorists killed in security operations in Awaran, Kech

By our correspondent

AWARAN-KECH, BALOCHISTAN: Security forces in Balochistan have successfully carried out two operations in the Kech and Awaran districts, resulting in the deaths of three terrorists linked to the banned Baloch Liberation Front, a group described by officials as an Indian proxy. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) identified the slain militants as the group's leader Sabirullah, his associate Amjad, also known as Bucho, and Yunus, another terrorist reportedly sponsored by India.

The first operation took place in Turbat, within the Kech district, where security forces killed Sabirullah and Amjad during a carefully planned raid. In a separate action in the Gishkour area of Awaran, based on intelligence gathered from secret sources, troops killed Yunus and injured two other militants. These operations were conducted with precision to target the militants who have been involved in a string of violent attacks against law enforcement personnel and the deliberate targeting of innocent civilians.

The ISPR highlighted that the eliminated terrorists were responsible for various acts of violence that have contributed to instability in the region. Following these successful strikes, clearance operations are ongoing as security forces continue their mission to root out any remaining militants and restore peace to the troubled areas.

This latest effort underlines the sustained commitment of Pakistan's security apparatus to counter terrorism and curb external interference that fuels insurgency in Balochistan. The operations have sent a strong message of resilience, reinforcing the state's resolve to protect its citizens and uphold law and order.

## PTI declines to file no-confidence motion, states Gohar

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar has firmly dismissed recent reports suggesting that the party is preparing to table a no-confidence motion. Addressing journalists, he clarified that such claims are baseless and reiterated that PTI has made no decision regarding any such move.

Barrister Gohar emphasized that the no-confidence motion is neither part of the party's current agenda nor under active consideration. He further confirmed that no meetings or discussions have taken place within PTI concerning this issue, seeking to put an end to speculation.

## Trump optimistic after Putin call on Ukraine ceasefire

Trump revealed talks with Moscow showed a surprising openness to diplomacy and exploring pathways to end the ongoing conflict

News Desk

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump has said he is "confident" that Russia and Ukraine will soon move towards direct ceasefire talks, following what he described as a "constructive and lengthy" conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The phone call, which reportedly stretched over nearly two hours, has reignited hopes of a breakthrough in a war that has cast a long shadow over Eastern Europe for more than two years.

In a statement posted to social media, Trump said both leaders had discussed "pathways to ending the ongoing conflict" and signaled a willingness from Moscow to pivot towards diplomacy. "It was a good conversation with President Putin," Trump said. "I'm confident that Russia and Ukraine will initiate ceasefire talks very soon. Ending the war is the real priority now."

The US president's remarks, while light on detail, appear aimed at building momentum toward an eventual de-escalation, as diplomatic backchannels stir into



activity. Trump added that beyond the battlefield, there is a growing appetite in Moscow to establish large-scale trade relations with the United States—hinting at a possible reorientation of Russian priorities once the war ends. "This is a huge opportunity for Russia to generate jobs and resources," he said. "Ukraine too stands to benefit from international trade as it enters a phase of reconstruction."

There was no immediate reaction from Kyiv or the Kremlin following Trump's comments, though the timing of the call—amid increasing calls within Europe for a diplomatic solution—has drawn attention. Trump noted that he had briefed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and European Commission Presi-

dent Ursula von der Leyen on the substance of his discussion with Putin. Leaders in France, Italy, Germany and Finland have also been informed, according to the US president, in what he described as part of "ongoing diplomatic coordination."

In what may prove to be a symbolic moment, Trump also welcomed the Vatican's reported willingness to host peace negotiations. Referring to Pope Leo's offer, he called it "a positive gesture" that could lend moral weight and international legitimacy to any future dialogue between Russia and Ukraine. While no official timetable or location for talks has yet been confirmed, the idea of the Holy See acting as neutral ground has been met with quiet interest in some European capitals.

## Islamabad crushes Karachi to seal qualifier spot

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad United stormed into the play-off stage of Pakistan Super League season 10 with a commanding 79-run victory over Karachi Kings in the final league match at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. The defending champions now advance to face Quetta Gladiators in the first qualifier on 21 May at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium.



Opting to bowl first after winning the toss, Karachi Kings were left to chase a daunting target of 252 runs. Islamabad United posted a formidable 251 for 5 in 20 overs, driven by explosive innings from Alex Hales (88) and Sahibzada Farhan (73).

Their 153-run partnership included 11 sixes and 15 fours, setting the tone early.

Skipper Shadab Khan added 42 runs, while Haider Ali (19 not out) and Ben Dwarshuis (10 not out) provided a late boost. Karachi's bowlers struggled, with Hasan Ali and Abbas Afridi going wicketless. Aamir Jamal, Khushdil Shah and Mir Hamza picked up one wicket each.

In reply, Karachi Kings crumbled under pressure, bowled out for 172 in the 19th over. David Warner topped the scoring with 43, followed by Abbas Afridi (34) and Tim Seifert (26), but the rest of the batting line-up failed to make significant contributions.

## Indian SC rejects BJP minister's apology

By our correspondent

NEW DEHLI: The Indian Supreme Court has rejected the apology of BJP state minister Vijay Shah over his offensive remarks targeting Colonel Sofia Qureshi. In a stern directive, the court ordered the establishment of a new special investigation team (SIT) to thoroughly probe the incident, emphasizing that the team must include a female officer to ensure sensitivity and fairness in the investigation.

Vijay Shah's arrest has been temporarily stayed, contingent on his full cooperation with the ongoing inquiry. The court conveyed deep disappointment over Shah's conduct, stating that his "filthy and disgraceful" remarks have brought shame upon the entire nation.

The controversy erupted after Vijay Shah publicly labelled Colonel Sofia Qureshi as "the sister of terrorists," alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had deployed her to "teach a lesson."

## WHO awards Pakistan for eliminating trachoma

News Desk

GENEVA: Pakistan has been awarded a prestigious global recognition by the World Health Organization (WHO) for successfully eliminating trachoma, a bacterial eye disease that can cause blindness if left untreated. The honor was presented to Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal during the World Health Assembly in Geneva.

WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus handed over the honorary certificate, marking what the minister described as "a proud milestone for Pakistan." Trachoma, caused by the bacterium Chlamydia trachomatis, is



one of the leading causes of preventable blindness worldwide. Its elimination is considered a significant public health achievement, especially in countries where access to clean water, sanitation, and basic health services has long been a challenge.

Speaking after receiving

serious injustice, Mithani has been placed in the Pakistan Audit and Accounts Group instead of the group he listed as his top preference. The unexpected allocation has sparked criticism among his supporters, particularly in Sindh, who see this as a blow to meritocracy.

In response, Mithani wrote a formal letter to President Asif Ali Zardari, appeal-

ing for corrective action.

The letter expresses pride in representing Sindh and the districts associated with Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto through his achievement.

However, he notes that this sense of honor has been overshadowed by what he perceives as unfair treatment in group allocation.

across several years, including targeted treatment campaigns, awareness drives, and improvements in hygiene and sanitation. He praised frontline health workers and international partners for their role in helping the country meet WHO's strict criteria for elimination.

The award places Pakistan among a growing list of countries that have met WHO's benchmarks for trachoma elimination, signalling a significant step forward for public health in South Asia. Health experts have called the recognition not only a technical achievement but also a symbol of what is possible when government commitment aligns with global health goals.