

## India-backed group ambushes school bus, three girls among dead

The girls were on their way to school when their lives were brutally cut short in what officials called a deliberate and heinous act of violence by Indian-backed terrorists

By ISPR

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan is reeling from the horror of a deadly terrorist attack in Balochistan's Khuzdar district, where a school bus was deliberately targeted, killing six people, including four children. The assault, which took place in the rugged terrain of southern Balochistan, has drawn condemnation from across the country and fresh accusations from Pakistan's military against India for allegedly backing the perpetrators.

According to security officials, the victims included three schoolgirls—Sania Soomro of Grade 6, Hafsa Kausar of Grade 7, and Ayesha Saleem of Grade 10. The girls were on their way to school when their lives were abruptly cut short in what authorities have described as a calculated and heinous act of violence.

The military's media wing, the Inter-Services Public



Relations (ISPR), issued a strongly worded statement, blaming Indian-sponsored terrorist networks for orchestrating the attack. Terming the assault a "cowardly act" aimed at children, ISPR alleged that India, having failed in conventional confrontations, was now resorting to proxy warfare by directing terrorist operations in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In addition to the six fatal-

ities, several other children sustained injuries, some of them critical. The gruesome nature of the attack has shocked the local population, sparking both grief and outrage across the region.

"This despicable act of targeting innocent schoolchildren reveals the morally bankrupt character of the Indian state," ISPR said. The military vowed that the perpetrators, along with those who facilitated and planned

the attack, would be brought to justice. "The ugly face of India will be exposed before the international community," the statement read.

The attack has intensified tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, at a time when relations are already strained. While Indian authorities have yet to respond to the allegations, Pakistan has insisted that it possesses evidence of Indian involvement in fomenting violence within its borders.

In Khuzdar, grief has turned to defiance. Families of the victims, supported by community members, are calling for accountability and stronger measures to protect schoolchildren in conflict-prone regions. As the nation mourns the loss of its young lives, the incident has once again raised urgent questions about the safety of children and the enduring impact of militancy on civilian populations.

## Kh Asif promises to present evidence on Khuzdar attack

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that the government will provide evidence to support its claims regarding the Khuzdar incident.

Speaking to the media, Khawaja Asif stated that the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) is operating as an Indian proxy. He said that India is funding such activities while groups like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the BLA carry out bloodshed within Pakistan.

He reiterated that the government will substantiate its claims with proof regarding the Khuzdar attack.

The defence minister added that India has deployed 900,000 troops in occupied Kashmir, and Pakistan is demanding an investigation into the Pahalgam incident. Commenting on the recent tensions between Pakistan and India, he said Pakistan showed considerable restraint for three to four days during the recent conflict.

## PM Shehbaz calls Khuzdar bus attack part of India's terror campaign

He declared the nation's unwavering support for the military and law enforcement, united in the fight to eradicate terrorism and safeguard sovereignty

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that the attack on a school bus in Khuzdar is a grim example of terrorism sponsored by India, accusing the country of targeting children through its state-backed agents. He arrived in Quetta on an emergency one-day visit, accompanied by Field Marshal Asim Munir.

During the visit, the Prime Minister was briefed on the Khuzdar attack and the prevailing situation. He said the nation stands firmly with the military and law enforcement agencies and is united in the mission to eliminate terrorism and protect the country's sovereignty and security. He added that the time has come for the people to show the same resolve they demonstrated in the face of Indian aggression in the past.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, the Khuzdar attack resulted in the martyrdom of three children and two security personnel, while 53 others were injured. Among the 39 wounded chil-



children, eight are in critical condition. The statement added that India-backed terrorist groups are tarnishing the names of the Baloch and Pashtun communities, and urged the international community to expose India's role in supporting terrorism. Pakistan, it said, will bring its enemies to justice.

Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir pledged to take the fight against foreign-backed terrorism to its logical and decisive conclusion. The Prime Minister, Field Marshal Asim Munir and cabinet ministers visited hospitals in Quetta to meet the injured children. Sharif has arrived in Quetta and will visit the injured from the Khuzdar bomb blast. He will

also be briefed on the incident. Federal ministers Khawaja Asif, Mohsin Naqvi and Atta Tarar are accompanying the Prime Minister.

According to sources, the Prime Minister will chair a meeting on law and order in Quetta, where a briefing on the Khuzdar terrorist attack will be given. Field Marshal Asim Munir is also expected to arrive in Quetta today. Both the Prime Minister and the Field Marshal will visit the injured. It is important to note that in Khuzdar, Balochistan, terrorists sponsored by India attacked a school bus carrying children, killing six people including four children, the bus driver and the helper, and injuring several others.

## US envoy condemns Khuzdar school bus attack

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The United States and UNICEF have voiced strong condemnation of the recent terrorist attack on a school bus in Khuzdar, Balochistan, in which innocent children were targeted in what has been described as an unforgivable act of violence. The assault, which sent shockwaves across Pakistan, has drawn widespread international outrage, with growing calls for justice and protection for the country's most vulnerable.

Nathalie Baker, the United States Chargé



d'Affaires in Pakistan, issued a heartfelt statement expressing solidarity with the people of Pakistan during what she described as a moment of shared grief and outrage.

The killing of children is unfathomable," Baker said. Her words echoed the sentiments pouring in from across Pakistan's political and civil society spectrum.

"We share the pain of the families who have lost their loved ones," she added.

Baker emphasized that no child should ever have to fear attending school and reiterated America's support for all those in Pakistan who are working to end violence.

"We stand with those working for peace and justice in Pakistan," she said, underscoring the broader need for global solidarity in the face of persistent extremism.

The United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, also reacted with sorrow and anger, reminding the world that education should never be a risk to life. "Going to school should never be a dangerous act for any child.

Sadly, for many children in Pakistan, this has become a painful reality," said a UNICEF spokesperson in a statement. "Enough is enough," the statement read.

"This senseless violence and needless suffering must end."

## Pakistan, China, Afghanistan commit to joint anti-terrorism efforts

For Afghanistan, long isolated by conflict and economic hardship, the extension of BRI brings opportunities to rebuild economy through stronger regional cooperation

News Desk

BEIJING: The foreign ministers of Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan gathered in Beijing recently for a trilateral meeting that underscored a shared determination to confront terrorism and foster peace, stability, and development in a region long marred by conflict and uncertainty. The discussions, described by Pakistan's Foreign Office as comprehensive, focused heavily on strengthening diplomatic ties and enhancing regional connectivity as key drivers for progress.

At the heart of their dialogue was a recognition that security remains the indispensable foundation upon which economic growth and regional cooperation must be built. The ministers spoke candidly about the urgent need to create an environment where trust can flourish, allowing nations to work together towards shared prosperity rather than suspicion and division. This message carried a hopeful tone, given the history of turbulence that has challenged the region's stability for decades.

A particularly notable outcome of the meeting was the consensus between Pakistan and China on ex-



tending the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan. This move, part of the broader Belt and Road Initiative, aims to bring Afghanistan into a larger framework of economic integration and infrastructural development.

For Afghanistan, long isolated by conflict and economic hardship, this extension offers the prospect of new opportunities and a chance to rebuild its shattered economy through strengthened regional ties.

Beyond infrastructure and development, the ministers voiced a united front on the need to eradicate terrorism completely. They agreed on enhancing security cooperation to confront threats that undermine peace and jeopardize the progress of all three countries. This shared resolve reflects an understanding that no single nation can tackle

these challenges alone and that only through collective effort can lasting security be achieved.

Concluding their talks, the foreign ministers announced plans to continue their engagement with the next meeting scheduled to be held in Kabul. This decision is a powerful symbol of inclusivity and cooperation, signaling an ongoing commitment to dialogue and partnership that transcends borders.

The meeting between Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan highlights a growing momentum towards collaborative solutions to the region's persistent problems. It reveals a cautious optimism that through sustained diplomacy and practical cooperation, a more peaceful and prosperous future may yet be within reach for these intertwined nations.

## Indian forces kill 27 nationalists, Maoist chief among dead

News Desk

CHHATTISGARH, INDIA: India has claimed a major success in its long-running counterinsurgency campaign, announcing that security forces have killed 27 nationalists, including one of the most senior figures in the Maoist movement. The operation, carried out in the dense forests of Narayanpur in Chhattisgarh state, reportedly led to the death of Nambala Lokeshu Rao, widely known as Basava Raju.

Nambala Lokeshu Rao was said to be the general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), a position that made him one of the most influential leaders within the armed Naxalite nationalists. India's Interior Minister praised the operation, calling it a significant blow to the Maoist ranks.



The minister said Basava Raju had played a central role in sustaining the armed struggle in India's central and eastern tribal belt, and had long evaded capture through his deep knowledge of the terrain and strong grassroots support in remote areas. The killing of Raju was part of a broader counter effort dubbed "Operation Black Forest," which aims to break the back of the decades-old nationalists' activities.

So far, the government claims that 54 Naxal fighters have been arrested, while 84 others have surrendered across various regions since the operation intensified. The Maoist nationalists' activities, often referred to as the Naxalite movement, has its roots in a peasant uprising in the late 1960s and continues to draw support from marginalized tribal communities in India's so-called "Red Corridor."

## Bugti says India targeting children to avenge defeat

News Desk

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti, speaking at a press conference in Quetta, condemned the recent terrorist attack on a school bus in Khuzdar, where six people—including four children, the driver, and the bus helper—were killed.

The injured were airlifted to the Combined Military Hospital in Quetta for urgent treatment.

Bugti acknowledged that intelligence agencies had anticipated a potential attack in Balochistan as retaliation for recent military setbacks but expressed shock that innocent children became the targets.

"The enemy has stooped so low as to target soft, defenseless children. Their blood will not be left unavenged," he vowed, promising relentless pursuit of the perpetrators.

Bugti referenced previous counterterrorism successes in the region, including operations against militants involved in attacks in Noshki and the assault on the Sibi train, underscoring that those responsible for Khuzdar would face the same fate.

Bugti pointed a firm finger at India, accusing it of financially backing terrorist groups and using Afghan soil to facilitate attacks against Pakistan. He stressed the importance of correctly identifying terrorists as enemies of the state, rejecting any attempts to label them as freedom fighters or political activists.

## Trump lauds Pakistan's leaders, calls nation 'wonderful'

Trump took credit for defusing tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors, pointing to a ceasefire deal as proof of his diplomacy

News Desk

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump, known for his unconventional rhetoric and sharp departures from diplomatic norms, made headlines once again with a mixed bag of statements during a press interaction at the White House. Speaking alongside South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Trump took a moment to shower praise on Pakistan and its leadership, even as his comments veered into more controversial terrain.

The President, while commenting on South Asia's delicate political balance, described the people of Pakistan as "wonderful" and its leaders as "great." Referring to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "a friend," Trump claimed credit for helping ease tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbors, noting that a ceasefire agreement had been reached. "I told them—what are you people doing? The situation was escalating badly—becoming deeper, bigger, and worse," he said, suggesting his intervention played a role in cooling what he characterized as a dangerously intensifying



conflict. Trump's remarks appeared to cast him as a peacemaker in the region, attempting to frame his diplomatic outreach as the catalyst for a fragile thaw between India and Pakistan. The nature and depth of his involvement, however, remain unclear, and neither New Delhi nor Islamabad has publicly endorsed this portrayal.

Still, his words were widely seen as a rare moment of balanced tone in a fraught geopolitical context, especially given the sensitivity surrounding any third-party mediation between the two nations.

Yet, the tone of the meeting quickly shifted. Without prompt and in stark contrast to his earlier conciliatory comments, Trump accused

South Africa of committing "genocide" against its white minority. Holding up documents and images which he claimed were evidence, Trump said white farmers in South Africa were being systematically targeted and forced to flee for their lives. "They're being hunted," he asserted, warning that the world was ignoring their plight.

While the President's praise for Pakistan may earn him goodwill in Islamabad and could resonate with diaspora communities in the US, his allegations against South Africa threaten to overshadow those remarks. Once again, Trump has managed to fuse praise and provocation in the same breath, leaving both allies and adversaries scrambling to parse the implications.

## Mir Ali attack linked to Indian-backed terror outfit, ISPR claims

News Desk

MIR ALI: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) has said that the cowardly attack in Mir Ali, North Waziristan, which led to civilian casualties on May 19, was carried out by Fitna al-Khawarij, a terror group allegedly operating under Indian sponsorship.

In a strongly worded statement, the military's media wing categorically dismissed accusations being circulated against security forces, calling them baseless and part of a malicious disinformation campaign. The ISPR said a full investigation into the incident was launched immediately, re-



flecting the Army's commitment to accountability and transparency.

However, it noted that the narrative being pushed by some groups—blaming the security forces for the violence—is entirely unfounded and appears to be orchestrated to damage the trust be-

tween local communities and law enforcement. "These elements are clearly working on the instructions of their Indian handlers," the statement read.

It went on to condemn the exploitation of civilian populations by these terrorist factions, accusing them of using

innocent residents as human shields while trying to destabilize the region. The statement emphasized that creating mistrust between the local population and Pakistan's security apparatus is part of the enemy's strategy—but that this strategy will not succeed.

The Army, it said, remains determined to uphold peace and security in the region and will pursue justice against those behind the attack. ISPR concluded by affirming that all those responsible for the heinous act will be brought to justice, and that the state will not allow external forces and their proxies to derail the progress made in restoring peace to the tribal areas.

# Israel massacres over 3,500 deaths since ceasefire ended

These figures reveal a grim reality of ongoing manslaughter of innocent civilians mostly children and women

## News Desk

GAZA: The Palestinian Ministry of Health has released stark figures revealing the devastating human toll of Israeli military actions since the fragile ceasefire ended in March. According to reports cited by Arab media, over 3,500 Palestinians have lost their lives during this period, with the death toll reaching 3,509. The Ministry further detailed the widespread suffering caused by ongoing hostilities, noting that nearly 10,000 people—9,909 in total—have been injured in the relentless attacks.

These figures paint a grim picture of continued violence and instability in the



region, underscoring the heavy price paid by civilians caught in the conflict. The Ministry of Health's statistics also place this recent surge in violence within the broader context of the conflict that erupted in October 2023. Since the outbreak of hostilities on October 7 last year, more

than 53,000 Palestinians have been killed, while over 121,000 individuals have suffered injuries, highlighting the catastrophic scale of the humanitarian crisis. The toll extends far beyond numbers, reflecting countless lives disrupted, families torn apart, and communities left in despair.

Hospitals and medical facilities, already stretched to their limits, face overwhelming pressure as they struggle to care for the wounded amid ongoing hostilities. The Ministry's report serves as a sobering reminder of the urgent need for renewed efforts towards peace and protection of civilian lives in a region long plagued by conflict.

Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates and Israel have reached a significant agreement to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, marking a crucial development amid the ongoing crisis.

This agreement follows a phone call between UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Ab-

dullah bin Zayed and his Israeli counterpart, signalling a rare moment of cooperation to address urgent humanitarian needs in the region.

According to Emirati state media, the agreement permits the immediate provision of aid, with initial shipments expected to supply enough food to meet the needs of around 15,000 people in Gaza.

The aid package includes essential items for local bakeries, helping to sustain daily food production, as well as critical supplies for the care of newborn babies—highlighting the desperate need to protect the most vulnerable amid the conflict.

## Pakistan backs Global Health, slams India, Israel

### News Desk

GENEVA: Pakistan's Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal reaffirmed the country's steadfast commitment to the global health agenda during the 78th World Health Assembly held in Geneva. He commended the World Health Organization for its pivotal role in leading and coordinating international health efforts.

Highlighting Pakistan's progress, Kamal pointed to significant achievements in reducing maternal and child mortality, expanding immunization coverage, and combating diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV, malaria, dengue, and hepatitis. He underscored the eradication of polio as a national priority, expressing optimism that Pakistan is nearing polio-free status under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

Addressing pressing geopolitical concerns, the minister strongly condemned what he termed Indian aggression against civilians and criticized Israeli attacks on hospitals and medical personnel in Palestine, describing these acts as serious violations of international law and human rights.

Kamal further sounded the alarm on India's alleged manipulation of the Indus River system, warning that such actions jeopardize Pakistan's drinking water supplies, agricultural sector, and essential health infrastructure. He urged the international community to hold India and Israel accountable for these violations, emphasizing the critical need to protect millions of lives.

## CM Sindh announces world's largest heart hospital in Karachi

### By our correspondent

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has announced the construction of the "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases" in Karachi's Landhi area, set to become the world's largest heart hospital. This landmark project marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's healthcare landscape, positioning the country as a future regional hub for advanced cardiovascular treatment and research.

In a high-level meeting chaired by the Chief Minister, the current performance and expansion plans of the Sindh Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (SICVD) were thoroughly reviewed. Attendees included Health Minister Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Chief Secretary Asif Haider Shah, Secretary Health Rehan Baloch, Secretary Chief Minister Zaman Narejo, and SICVD Executive Director Professor Javed Sial, among other



senior officials. Murad Ali Shah praised SICVD as a shining example of public health service, highlighting its role in providing free, comprehensive cardiac emergency care, complex surgeries, and specialized pediatric heart disease treatment.

The new institute will feature 1,200 beds, five state-of-the-art operating theaters, four catheterisation labs, a hybrid lab, and advanced imaging facilities including CT and MRI. It will also house a research center and a nursing school, creating a comprehensive ecosystem for treatment,

training, and innovation in cardiovascular medicine.

The Chief Minister was briefed on ongoing and future developments, including expansion efforts in Tando Muhammad Khan and Hyderabad.

The newly completed SICVD facility in Tando Muhammad Khan will soon open, offering an additional operating theater, a pediatric intensive care unit, surgical ICU, and a modern Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD) — all aimed at enhancing surgical capacity and specialized care in these underserved areas.

## SALU VC inspects exams centers to ensure transparency

### By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Vice Chancellor of Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU), conducted a thorough inspection of the ongoing first-semester examinations at the university campus. Accompanied by senior officials, including

PVC Professor Dr. Wahid Bux Jatoti, and Deans Dr. Khushk closely reviewed key aspects of the examination process.

During his visit, the Vice Chancellor focused on verifying the seating arrangements, monitoring invigilation procedures, and checking the availability of

essential student facilities. He stressed the importance of maintaining a disturbance-free and equitable environment, ensuring that all necessary amenities, such as clean drinking water and proper ventilation, were adequately provided in the examination halls.

## Twin cities journalists gather to celebrate military milestone

### By Asghar Ali Mubarak

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA) held a Thanksgiving Day event to celebrate General Syed Asim Munir's historic promotion to Field Marshal, honoring the military's pivotal role in national security and the resurgence of cricket in Pakistan.

The gathering brought together sports journalists and cricket officials from both cities, emphasizing the unifying power of sport in the country.

Former Pakistan Cricket Board chairman and renowned commentator Ramiz Raja condemned what he described as India's politicisation of cricket, praising Pakistan's resilience amid challenges. "Cricket is Pakistan's global identity," he stated, urging all stakeholders to collaborate in elevating the sport to new heights.

Senior journalists Abdul Muhai Shah and Shakeel Ahmed Awan underscored the armed forces' crucial role in enabling the safe return of international cricket to Pakistan.

Asghar Ali Mubarak, Founding President of the South Asian Sports Journalists Association, lauded Field Marshal Munir's strategic leadership and commended the nation's resolve to honor its defenders.

"Recognizing those who instill fear in the enemy is the mark of resilient nations," he remarked.

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## Youth empowerment, social cohesion focus of theatre project

### By Sudhir Ahmad Afridi

PESHAWAR: The Society for Human Rights and Prisoners' Aid (SHARP), supported by the European Union under its AMAN-KAAR (Performer for Peace) project, recently held a theatre-based advocacy event at City University and the Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences) in Pe-



shawar. The initiative, conducted in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), harnesses the power of theatre to promote peace, inclusion, and youth empowerment while amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. The performances addressed vital themes such as nonviolent

communication, critical thinking, and empathy, presenting them as essential tools to counter misinformation and societal polarization.

Through emotionally resonant storytelling, the actors conveyed powerful messages encouraging dialogue and mutual respect among communities fractured by violence and mistrust. Following each performance, inter-

active dialogue sessions led by SHARP Project Manager Zahid Usman and Theatre Director Safer Ullah Khan offered a safe space for students and faculty to engage deeply with topics of peace-building, youth leadership, and community resilience. These discussions were met with enthusiasm and emotional engagement, with many participants expressing a renewed commitment to peace and social justice.

## METRO MATTERS

### MQM-P condemns terrorist attack on school bus in Khuzdar

#### By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) has issued a strong condemnation of the terrorist attack targeting a school bus in Balochistan's Khuzdar district, describing it as an act orchestrated by Indian-backed terrorist groups. In a statement released from the party's Bahadurabad headquarters on 21 May, the MQM-P spokesperson expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of innocent lives, including three children, and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

The spokesperson accused India of resorting to indirect tactics after its defeat in conventional warfare, alleging that it now supports banned militant organisations to foment chaos and instability within Pakistan. "India is employing proxy warfare by arming, training, and financing proscribed outfits to destabilize Pakistan," the statement asserted.

MQM-P urged the Government of Pakistan to publicly expose India's involvement in cross-border terrorism with concrete evidence before the international community. The party also called on global powers to recognize and respond to India's blatant interference and overt backing of terrorist networks targeting Pakistan.

Appealing to the nation's armed forces, the spokesperson emphasized the importance of sustained military operations aimed at rooting out terrorism completely. Special attention was urged to protect the lives of innocent children and civilians, particularly in the vulnerable region of Balochistan.

### KMC cracks down on municipal law violations across Karachi

#### By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: Acting on directives from Mayor Murtaza Wahab, the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) has initiated a citywide crackdown to enforce municipal laws, focusing on illegal garbage dumping, roadside vehicle washing, and unauthorized encroachments across major localities in Karachi. The Enforcement and Implementation Department has already launched operations in areas including Gulshan-e-Iqbal, District Korangi, and Nazimabad.

During the campaign, heavy fines have been imposed and stern warnings issued to shopkeepers and businesses violating municipal regulations. This drive follows a resolution passed by the KMC Council under Chapter 15, Section 132, and Schedule VI of the Sindh Local Government Act 2013. The resolution specifically targets illegal vehicle washing outside commercial premises such as malls, plazas, offices, and industrial centers, as well as nurseries misusing water board supply lines.

Officials have highlighted that public transportation terminals—bus, van, and coach stations—are frequently misused for excessive water consumption during vehicle washing. This not only leaves streets dirty but also inflicts long-term damage on road surfaces, leading to costly repairs and maintenance for the city administration.

The KMC also underscored the persistent issue of illegal encroachments, which disrupt traffic flow and create safety risks for pedestrians. In response, the corporation has directed sustained and firm action to clear public spaces and restore civic order. Mayor Wahab's administration reiterated its commitment to strict enforcement of municipal laws, aiming to enhance the cleanliness, functionality, and visual appeal of Karachi.

### Karachi student found in Hyderabad after alleged abduction

#### By Ahsan Mughal

KARACHI: In a development that has captured public attention, a first-year student who went missing from Karachi's Joharabad area has been located in Hyderabad and returned to Karachi. The young woman's sudden disappearance sparked fears of abduction, prompting police to launch an investigation amid growing concern from her family and the wider community.

According to police reports, the student went missing several days ago while returning home from college. Her brother promptly filed an abduction case against unknown persons after receiving a distressing message from the girl's phone, suggesting she had been taken against her will. This message intensified fears and prompted a wider search.

The investigation took a new turn when the family informed authorities that the student had been found in Hyderabad. It was her fiancé who reportedly brought her back to Karachi. In her initial statement to the police, the student maintained that she had indeed been kidnapped by unidentified individuals but managed to escape while in Hyderabad. She described how she used a rickshaw driver's phone to contact her fiancé, who then came to her rescue.

However, police officials noted that the family's delayed communication about the girl's recovery raised questions, and they found inconsistencies in the student's statements. These discrepancies have led investigators to consider whether the incident was a straightforward case of abduction or if other factors might be involved.

Authorities remain cautious as they continue to probe the circumstances surrounding the student's disappearance and recovery. The case highlights ongoing concerns about safety and security for young women in Karachi, a city where abductions and missing persons cases often provoke public anxiety and demand swift justice. For now, questions linger over the true nature of the event, as police work to piece together the facts and determine the full story behind the student's ordeal.

### Rs370m worth of banned medicines seized at Karachi airport

#### By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: In a significant crackdown at Jinnah International Airport, customs officials seized banned pharmaceutical drugs valued at Rs 370 million, dealing a major blow to illegal imports of controlled substances. The operation, described as one of the largest of its kind in recent times, involved three coordinated actions targeting suspicious parcels arriving from Europe.

According to a customs spokesperson, the parcels were intercepted after arriving from France and Germany. Upon thorough inspection, officials discovered that the shipments contained prohibited medicines, raising concerns over the potential health risks these drugs could pose if circulated in the market. The seized pills were subjected to testing with a drug detection kit, which confirmed the presence of banned substances.

The spokesperson further revealed that authorities have registered a formal First Information Report (FIR) and have launched a detailed investigation to trace the source of these illicit shipments and identify those responsible for smuggling the banned pharmaceuticals. The move signals the government's resolve to crack down on illegal drug imports, which not only violate laws but also threaten public health.

This bust underscores ongoing challenges faced by customs and law enforcement agencies at Karachi's main international gateway, where vigilant monitoring is critical to preventing the entry of unsafe and illegal goods. As investigations continue, authorities hope this action will deter similar attempts and reinforce the message that such contraband will not be tolerated.

### 12-year-old girl found dead in Karachi

#### By our correspondent

KARACHI: In Karachi's Surjani Town, the body of a 12-year-old girl was found hanging inside her home. Police handed over the body to the family after conducting a post-mortem, which initially indicated suicide, with no evidence of rape or murder.

The deceased girl was identified as Mehak, who had been living with her uncle in Surjani Town. According to family members, Mehak was managing a small goods shop adjacent to their home. Police collected evidence from the scene and moved the body to Abbasi Shaheed Hospital for a post-mortem. The hospital administration confirmed there were no signs of physical assault or sexual violence on the body. Speaking to the media, the girl's uncle said he was woken by his wife's screams and found Mehak's body hanging by a scarf. The girl's father stated they had no enmity with anyone.

### Over Rs70m recovered in illegal Hawala-Hundi network

#### By our correspondent

KARACHI: In a targeted operation in Karachi, the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Corporate Crime Circle arrested a key suspect involved in the illicit business of hawala and hundi—an underground money transfer system often used to move funds outside official banking channels.

The suspect was apprehended from PECHS Block 2, where he was reportedly running a sophisticated financial network facilitating illegal international and domestic money transfers. According to FIA officials, the operation uncovered a well-organized setup used to conduct these unregulated transactions, which are often linked to money laundering, tax evasion, and terror financing.

Following the initial arrest, investigators launched a second raid based on intelligence gathered during interrogation. The combined operations led to the recovery of Rs70 million in Pakistani currency and 11,900 US dollars in cash. Authorities believe the seized amount represents proceeds from the illegal hawala hundi network.

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EDITORIAL

## Khuzdar's children and India's fascism

The recent attack on a school bus in Khuzdar, Balochistan, stands as a tragic symbol of a broader and far more dangerous pattern of violence that has plagued the region for years. It is a stark illustration of the moral abyss into which the world seems to be sliding when children—our most vulnerable and precious beings—are deliberately targeted and killed. The sheer horror of such an act defies understanding, yet it has become a grim reality that communities in Balochistan and beyond continue to endure. What makes this atrocity even more chilling is the evidence pointing towards the involvement of external powers, particularly India, in orchestrating proxy wars that exploit local insurgencies to destabilize Pakistan.

The attack claimed the lives of six people, including four children. Among those who lost their lives were three young girls—Sania Soomro, Hafsa Kausar, and Ayesha Saleem—schoolchildren whose only 'crime' was to be on their way to an education that should have been a safe passage to a brighter future. Their tragic deaths have sent shockwaves not only through their community but across Pakistan and the international arena. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) of Pakistan has categorically condemned the incident and attributed the attack to Indian-backed terrorist groups operating in the region, a charge that, if substantiated, underscores a sinister and calculated policy of fomenting unrest through violence and terror.

India's use of proxy forces in Balochistan is not a new development but rather part of a long-standing and deeply troubling pattern. The strategy is clear: destabilize Pakistan by supporting separatist insurgencies and militant groups, fuelling violence and mistrust along its borders. This proxy war tactic, hidden behind the façade of local grievances, allows India to evade direct accountability while pushing Pakistan into a defensive posture. The human cost, however, is borne by innocent civilians, often the most vulnerable, including children, women, and the elderly. The Khuzdar school bus bombing is emblematic of the cruelty that emerges when such proxy wars are waged. It reflects a callous disregard for human life and international law. Children caught in conflict zones should never be regarded as collateral damage or strategic targets.

Education is a fundamental right and a beacon of hope that terrorists seek to extinguish by spreading fear and chaos. Targeting schools and children is a tactic designed to break the spirit of communities, to spread terror beyond physical destruction and instill a lasting psychological wound. Pakistan's military response to this attack highlights the grave security challenges the country faces from these proxy insurgencies. The ISPR described the bombing as a 'cowardly act,' emphasizing how India's failure on conventional battlefields has led it to resort to such underhanded means. This reflects a dangerous escalation, where sovereign borders become battlegrounds for foreign agendas, and civilian populations are turned into pawns in a deadly geopolitical game.

The question that haunts the conscience of every peace-loving individual is how a state that claims to champion democracy and human rights can justify such actions, which not only violate international law but also brutalize innocent people. The international community's reaction to the Khuzdar tragedy is a reminder that these events are not isolated or domestic problems, but part of a global crisis involving the use of terror as an instrument of state policy. UNICEF's condemnation, voiced by Karen Reddy, highlights the universal understanding that schools must be sanctuaries of safety. Yet, for many children in conflict zones like Balochistan, education has become synonymous with danger. The failure to protect children in such contexts betrays a global failure of governance and humanity.

The loss of these children, their futures violently cut short, is a tragedy that transcends borders and demands urgent attention and action. The human dimension of this atrocity cannot be overstated. Each life lost was a story abruptly ended—a family shattered, a community plunged into grief. Behind the stark statistics lie mothers who will never see their daughters again, fathers who bear the unbearable burden of loss, and classmates whose innocence has been brutally stolen. The attack does not just destroy lives; it destroys hope, undermines social cohesion, and sows seeds of fear that threaten to fracture the very fabric of society. For too long, proxy wars have been a hidden scourge in regions like Balochistan, where foreign interests exploit legitimate local grievances to fuel conflict.

This cynical manipulation of local aspirations for political autonomy or justice is a betrayal of the very people it claims to support. Instead of fostering dialogue or peaceful resolution, these proxies stoke violence and terror, deepening divisions and suffering. The international community, particularly those states that value peace and human rights, must step up their efforts to expose and dismantle such covert operations. Justice for the victims of Khuzdar demands more than condemnation—it requires a concerted, transparent effort to hold accountable those who orchestrate and enable these attacks. This includes not only the direct perpetrators but also the foreign sponsors who supply resources, training, and ideological backing.

It demands rigorous investigation, international cooperation, and a firm stance against the use of terrorism as a tool of foreign policy. The sanctity of childhood and the right to education must be defended with unwavering resolve.

This tragedy also offers a solemn reminder of the broader stakes involved. Proxy wars do not remain contained; they spill over borders, exacerbate regional instability, and often spiral into wider conflicts. They breed mistrust between nations, entrench cycles of retaliation, and delay the possibility of peace and development. For Pakistan, the pain of Khuzdar is a call to redouble efforts not only to secure its borders but also to address the underlying political, social, and economic challenges within Balochistan that insurgents seek to exploit.

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

By Uzma Ehtasham



India's role as the principal architect behind the terrorism that continues to plague Pakistan is a harsh reality that must be acknowledged without hesitation. Whether it is through militant outfits like Fitna-ul-Khawarij or insurgent groups operating in Balochistan, India's hand is unmistakable in orchestrating violence that aims to derail Pakistan's progress, sabotage its peace, and destabilize its security apparatus. This is not mere speculation or political rhetoric; it is a conclusion supported by a wealth of credible evidence. International intelligence agencies, including those from the United States, the United Nations, and respected human rights organizations, have repeatedly verified India's direct and indirect involvement in fomenting unrest within Pakistan's borders. The fabrication of false pretexts to justify these covert operations is part of a broader, relentless campaign aimed at destabilization and disruption.

The sinister objective behind this proxy warfare is clear: to keep Pakistan locked in a perpetual state of insecurity, preventing it from advancing economically, politically, and socially. Such destabilization tactics do not just target Pakistan's military or government institutions but deliberately inflict harm on civilians, thereby spreading fear and mistrust throughout society. The targeting of innocents—women, children, and everyday citizens—reveals the moral bankruptcy of this approach. It betrays any pretense of respect for international norms or human rights and exposes a ruthless strategy designed to cripple a nation from

within.

Despite the formidable challenge posed by these Indian-sponsored terror groups, Pakistan's security forces have displayed commendable resilience and determination in their ongoing fight against this menace. Recent military operations across Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have delivered significant blows to the networks of violence, successfully neutralizing key militants affiliated with groups such as Fitna-ul-Khawarij and the Baloch Liberation Front. The sacrifices made by brave soldiers, exemplified by Lance Naik Sabir Afridi and Farhad Ali Turi, who laid down their lives in these operations, stand as poignant reminders of the human cost involved in defending the nation. The elimination of notorious commanders like Sabirullah and Amjad alias Bacho highlights the precision and effectiveness of intelligence-driven counterterrorism efforts.

These operations have spanned some of the most sensitive and volatile regions, including Lakki Marwat, Bannu, the Gishkore area of Awaran district, and Kech district in Balochistan. The success of these campaigns not only disrupts the operational capabilities of insurgent groups but also sends a clear message that Pakistan will not tolerate the use of its soil for the agendas of foreign powers. Such acts of defiance are crucial in maintaining national sovereignty and safeguarding the lives of ordinary citizens. The insurgent threat extends beyond the immediate battlefield. For instance, in North Waziristan's Mir Ali district, militants recently launched a brazen attack on security forces, which was met with a swift and resolute response.

The deceased militants involved in that operation were responsible for numerous

attacks on security personnel and civilians alike, further underscoring the indiscriminate violence inflicted upon the population. The discovery of large caches of weapons, ammunition, and explosives during these raids offers concrete proof of the scale and intensity of India's interference in Pakistan's internal affairs. This is not merely a local insurgency but a well-funded, strategically backed campaign designed to ignite chaos. Perhaps the most damning revelation is the involvement of members from Hindu nationalist organizations in India, particularly from Bihar, who have been found managing covert financial accounts supporting the Baloch insurgency.

This direct financial link substantiates long-held claims about India's systematic sponsorship of terrorism in the region. Such revelations should alarm the international community, highlighting the dangerous extent to which proxy wars have been weaponized to destabilize Pakistan. By exploiting flashpoints like the Pahalgam attack, India seeks to further inflame tensions, spreading organized terrorism under the guise of political retaliation. Yet, this strategy of fomenting discord ultimately undermines regional peace and security, risking a broader conflict that no nation can afford. Pakistan's armed forces, however, remain undeterred by these provocations. Their resolve to eliminate this curse of terrorism is unwavering, driven by a commitment to secure peace and stability for the country and its people.

The sacrifices made by countless soldiers and the persistent efforts to dismantle terror networks are a testament to this determination. The military's pledge to crush this menace "once and for all" is more than rhetoric—it reflects a sober understanding that Pakistan's future depends

on rooting out the external and internal forces that seek to divide and destroy. What this situation demands is not only a military response but also a broader recognition from the international community that state-sponsored terrorism is a grave threat to global peace and security. Allowing any nation to engage in such covert operations under the guise of proxy warfare only perpetuates cycles of violence, making sustainable peace ever more elusive. The world must come together to hold accountable those who finance, arm, and encourage these terrorist activities, irrespective of their geopolitical affiliations.

For Pakistan, the challenge ahead is complex. Beyond neutralizing militant cells, there is a pressing need to address the underlying grievances that insurgent groups exploit to recruit and radicalize. This includes socio-economic development, political inclusion, and respect for the rights and identities of diverse communities within Pakistan's borders. True peace can only be achieved by combining firm security measures with efforts to heal the fractures that fuel unrest. In conclusion, India's role as the chief architect of terrorism in Pakistan represents a calculated attempt to undermine a sovereign nation through proxy warfare. This approach not only violates international law but breaks havoc on innocent lives and communities. The international community must recognize the seriousness of this issue, condemn the use of proxy terrorism in all its forms, and support efforts to restore peace in the region.

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## Da Vinci's creativity

By Atiq Raja



When we talk about creativity, the conversation often veers toward the modern—technology, startups, innovation labs. But long before we had buzzwords for creativity, there lived a man whose life still speaks louder than any TED Talk or design-thinking seminar. Leonardo da Vinci was not simply an artist or inventor—he was a way of thinking, a philosophy in motion. He didn't just paint the Mona Lisa or dream of flying machines. He observed life so deeply that his mind refused to accept limits, and therein lies the timeless lesson. Leonardo teaches us that creativity is not a lightning strike. It's a quiet discipline, a curiosity nurtured every day. He wasn't born with secrets others didn't have. He simply refused to stop asking questions, refused to see art as separate from science, and refused to give up when ideas failed.

The brilliance of da Vinci is not only in what he made, but in how he thought—and we have every reason to follow his path. Start with curiosity. Leonardo was famously obsessed with questions. Why is the sky blue? How do birds stay aloft? How does

the heart move blood through the body? To most, these are passing thoughts. To Leonardo, they were invitations to explore the edges of human knowledge. He didn't wait for someone to teach him; he taught himself through endless observation and inquiry. That's the first lesson. Ask better questions. Not just about your work, but about the world. Don't accept the obvious. If something puzzles you, don't dismiss it—dwell in the puzzle. A creative life begins when we stop being satisfied with easy answers. In the spirit of da Vinci, write your questions down. Carry a small notebook. Fill it with wonder. Let the act of questioning become a ritual.

Leonardo also teaches us to erase the artificial lines we draw between disciplines. His notebooks contain anatomical studies beside designs for war machines, poetic reflections beside architectural plans. He did not see art and science as opposites, but as two lenses on the same truth. Today, we too often confine ourselves—"I'm not a numbers person," we say, or "I'm not creative." Leonardo would have laughed. The brain thrives on connections, and creativity grows at the intersection of ideas. So if you're a coder, read some poetry. If you're a teacher, take up sketching. If you're a scientist, listen to jazz. Cross-pollinate your passions. The best ideas often emerge from unexpected

combinations. Then comes the habit Leonardo was perhaps most known for: deep observation. He could stare at a swirling stream for hours, just to understand how water moved.

His fascination with detail was not obsessive—it was meditative. He trained himself to see what others overlooked. It's why his paintings, like the Last Supper, pulse with lifelike emotion. He didn't just paint people; he studied them—how they moved, how they thought, how light fell across their faces. This is a practice we can all adopt. Take ten minutes each day to truly observe something—your hands, a leaf, the way your dog's eyes move when you speak. Draw it. Describe it.

Not to share on social media, but to learn how to see again. Most of us rush through life in a blur. Leonardo slowed down, and that slowness led to insight. Another crucial lesson: embrace failure. Leonardo left behind designs that never worked, machines that never flew, and sketches that never became final works.

But he never saw these as defeats. They were steps in his process. Today, we avoid failure as if it's proof we don't belong. But for the creative mind, failure is not evidence of incapacity—it's a necessary teacher. So build something that might not work. Write something that might not be good. The act

of trying expands your boundaries. Creativity is not the gift of the perfect—it is the reward of the persistent. Lastly, Leonardo reminds us to stay amazed. He never outgrew his sense of wonder. At 67, he was still dissecting cadavers to understand the human form. Still sketching inventions. Still dreaming of what could be. He blended childlike awe with grown-up discipline—and this mix is the true secret of the creative life. In our adult lives, we're encouraged to be efficient, strategic, and productive.

But wonder doesn't live in efficiency. It lives in awe, in mystery, in the moments we let ourselves get lost in beauty or bafflement. So visit a gallery, wander through a forest, read something that confuses you. Let your imagination stretch. Leonardo da Vinci's legacy is not just in his genius, but in his attitude. He believed that creativity is not a talent reserved for the few. It is a way of seeing. A way of thinking. A way of being. And it is available to anyone willing to look closely, think freely, and keep asking questions. So don't wait for permission. Don't wait to be called "creative." Open your eyes. Pick up the pen, the brush, the camera. Ask questions. Try something new. Fail a little. Wonder a lot. And as Leonardo might remind us, saper vedere—learn how to see. That's where it begins.

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## Peace first, but not at any cost

By Asghar Ali Mubarak



In a speech laden with pride, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stood before the nation's air force heroes at Kamra Airbase and offered a message that echoed far beyond the hangars and runways of Pakistan's aviation stronghold. It was a moment stitched with triumph, but woven through with a stark warning: peace will not come without justice. There was nothing casual about the Prime Minister's tone when he declared that Pakistan's 'falcons had crushed the enemy's pride.' Standing shoulder to shoulder with the pilots of the Pakistan Air Force, he hailed their role in what he boldly described as the longest air battle of the 21st century. It was a dramatic phrase, but one that seemed to encapsulate the raw emotion of a country that has endured humiliation, provocation and loss, and had now, in the eyes of many, earned a re-sounding military vindication.

What Shehbaz offered was not just a victory lap. It was a narrative—one designed to remind both domestic and foreign audiences that Pakistan may be fatigued by conflict, but it is not weakened by it. "Three Rafales were shot down. Modi will remember that day forever," he declared, invoking the name of India's Prime Minister in terms that left little room for ambiguity.

"You have sent a clear message: if you dare look at us again with malice, you will be trampled underfoot." The Prime Minister's words were not just for the men in uniform. They were for 240 million citizens watching a dangerous chapter in South Asia's long and fraught history unfold. They were for regional powers sitting on the sidelines and for international diplomats attempting to navigate yet another cycle of hostility between two nuclear-armed neighbors.

And they were very much for India, whose recent actions—according to Pakistan—crossed several diplomatic and military red lines. The roots of this conflagration are tangled, as they often are in this part of the world. It began, ostensibly, with the April 22 Pahalgam incident in Indian-administered Kashmir, where Indian paramilitary forces were killed in an attack New Delhi blamed squarely on Pakistan. That accusation, fiercely rejected in Islamabad, was followed by a rapid unraveling of what little bilateral goodwill remained. India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty—a move Pakistan interpreted as tantamount to a declaration of war. Diplomatic expulsions followed, as did trade closures and restrictions on civilian movement.

But it was the night of February 6 and 7 that turned this cold hostility into active conflict. Missile strikes by India on multiple Pakistani cities—Kotli, Bahawalpur, Muridke, Bagh, and Muzaffarabad—killed 26 civilians and injured dozens more.

These attacks marked a bloody turning point. The response from Pakistan was swift and calculated. Operation Bunyan Muroos, launched on February 10, saw Pakistani forces target key Indian military assets, including airbases at Udhampur, Pathankot, and Adampur, as well as the BrahaMos missile storage site and an S-400 defence system. Fatah-1 missiles, according to military officials, were used to devastating effect. Intelligence centers involved in what Pakistan described as cross-border subversion in Rajouri and Nowshera were also hit.

Yet, in the face of this military spectacle, Shehbaz Sharif chose to double down not just on might—but on principle. "They martyred our children, but we struck their military installations. We made no errors in judgment," he said, adding that Pakistan's restraint and dignity marked the essential difference between its actions and those of its adversary. The war, in his words, had been forced upon Pakistan, but it had been answered with courage and clarity. Still, this is not just a story of military retaliation. Shehbaz's speech at Kamra was also an overture—albeit one built on firm, non-negotiable terms. "To the enemy, I say: your war fever has broken. Now let us talk about peace," he said, placing Kashmir at the center of any future negotiations.

There is, he insisted, no path to genuine peace in South Asia that bypasses the right of Kashmiris to self-determination under UN resolutions. It is a position that Pakistan

has held for decades, but rarely has it been voiced so forcefully in the immediate aftermath of such a high-stakes military exchange. The message was clear: Pakistan is willing to talk—but only if India comes to the table without the arrogance of power, and with an openness to address what Pakistan considers the core of the conflict. The Prime Minister's words were layered with emotion but also unmistakably strategic. By invoking national pride, military prowess and divine favour, he rallied public sentiment. But by reasserting Pakistan's commitment to diplomacy—however conditional—he also left the door ajar for a path other than confrontation.

Whether that path will be taken by New Delhi is another matter altogether. The stakes are higher than they have been in years, and both sides have tasted the bitter fruits of escalation. The question now is whether this moment of military reckoning can evolve into a political reckoning—a recognition that neither missiles nor martyrs can bring lasting security, and that no war, no matter how just it feels, can substitute for a just settlement. What remains beyond doubt is that the price of ignoring Pakistan's red lines has now been made explicit. But whether this newfound clarity brings resolution—or further rupture—will depend not on how loudly leaders speak, but how wisely they listen.

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## To keep climate ambition alive

By Saleha Qureshi

The year 2025 was meant to be a year of renewed climate ambition. The world had a roadmap with the third round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) due and COP30 on the horizon in Brazil. But instead of converging on solutions, geopolitical fractures are widening, threatening the very foundation of the Paris Agreement.

As the world crossed the February 2025 deadline for submitting Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs 3.0), the spirit of the Paris Agreement appears to be faltering. The recent withdrawal of the US from key international climate forums is a sharp reversal under its latest leadership and has sent a chilling signal through the global climate community. And it's not just Washington; a quiet disillusionment is setting across capitals from Brasilia to Delhi. This retreat comes at a critical moment, with over 120 countries

still due to update their NDCs, according to UNFCCC tracking.

This erosion of momentum comes at a time when the world should be rallying towards COP30, a pivotal milestone set to take place in Brazil later this year. COP30, scheduled in Belem, Brazil, is the first major summit after the Global Stocktake and is responsible for converting assessment into action. It was expected to catalyse climate finance delivery, strengthen carbon pricing cooperation, and address implementation shortfalls. Yet the mood is drifting from ambition to damage control. Instead of being a moment of renewed ambition and solidarity, the road to COP30 feels increasingly uncertain. Once the flagship forum to anchor climate progress, the COP process now risks becoming a symbolic ritual, its political leverage weakened by fractured alliances and wavering commitments.

The timing could not be worse. In the

Global South, the crisis is no longer an abstract threat; it is reality. South Asia recorded its hottest March in over a century this year, with brutal heatwaves pushing thermometers past 47 C. Widespread hailstorms and drought have decimated crops, displaced millions, and pushed food and water systems to the brink. According to the UN, over 40 million people faced climate-induced resource insecurity in 2024 alone.

For countries already struggling with fragile economies and post-pandemic recoveries, the retreat of global climate leadership feels like betrayal.

The Paris Agreement was built on a simple promise: while ambition would be nationally determined, solidarity would be globally assured. The first round of NDCs in 2015 marked an unprecedented convergence around climate goals. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 updates (NDCs 2.0) showed modest ambition increases. But

NDCs 3.0 are unfolding in a fractured global context, casting doubt on collective progress. Today, that assurance is eroding fast.

The risk is now crystal clear. Today, that assurance is eroding fast. Despite repeated pledges, the OECD's longstanding \$100 billion annual climate finance commitment due since 2020 remains unmet, undermining trust between the Global North and Global South.

Without a major course correction, NDCs 3.0 will become less of a rallying point and more of a fragmented, uneven patchwork. Some countries will delay submission. For instance, Indonesia has backtracked on its earlier coal phase-out timeline, while India's latest update emphasises energy security over mitigation targets. In countries like Pakistan, the fiscal strain and energy crisis have delayed policy reforms needed to align with 1.5 C. Others will water down ambition.

## IMF reportedly unhappy with privatization of state-owned enterprises

**Pakistani officials have assured the IMF that the privatization of the national airline and key entities such as ISCO, FESCO, and GESCO will be completed within the current year**

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Consultations between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) continue as both sides work to finalize budget targets for the upcoming fiscal year. While discussions remain ongoing, sources reveal that the IMF has expressed concern over the slow pace of privatizing state-owned enterprises, placing particular emphasis on the need to remove obstacles delaying the sale of the national airline.

Pakistani officials have responded by assuring the IMF that the privatization of the national airline will be completed within the current year. In addition, plans are underway to finalize the privatization of key entities including ISCO, FESCO, and GESCO by the end of the year. A second phase will then focus on HESCO, SEPCO, and PESCO, while the sale of the Nandipur power plant is targeted for January 2026. Meanwhile,



work is also progressing on the transaction structure for the privatization of the Roosevelt Hotel, underscoring the government's broader effort to offload profitable state-owned commercial enterprises.

Officials have made clear that privatization remains a top priority, and relevant legislation to support these pub-

lic sector reforms is expected to be drafted by December. This push forms part of Pakistan's broader strategy to improve fiscal discipline and stimulate economic growth through greater private sector involvement.

Though data has been shared with the IMF and questions are being ad-

ressed, no formal conditions have yet been agreed upon for the next fiscal year's budget. Pakistan has requested various tax concessions aimed at supporting economic recovery, with the IMF reviewing the proposals before making a decision. While no tax relief has been rejected so far, negotiations around concessions for the real estate sector remain ongoing.

The IMF has also urged Pakistan's provincial governments to tighten their budgets by reducing expenditures and enhancing revenue collection. A particular focus has been placed on ensuring effective collection of agricultural income tax, an area seen as critical to strengthening the country's fiscal health. As negotiations progress, the government faces the complex challenge of balancing IMF demands with domestic economic priorities, with the outcome likely to shape Pakistan's economic trajectory in the year ahead.

## PM stresses housing reforms in budget plans

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has emphasized the importance of affordable housing, directing that the recommendations of the task force on low-cost housing projects be incorporated into the upcoming budget proposals. This instruction came during his chairing of a meeting focused on expanding access to affordable housing across the country.

Addressing the task force, the Prime Minister underlined that ensuring the common man can secure a home through low-cost housing schemes is a key priority for his government. He highlighted that such initiatives are not only essential for addressing the pressing need for shelter but also have the potential to boost the broader economy by creating jobs and stimulating growth.

Shehbaz Sharif stressed that the success of these housing projects depends on their accessibility and affordability, urging the task force to develop practical recommendations, particularly regarding financing mechanisms, without delay. The task force has been tasked with finalizing its proposals promptly so they can be integrated into the budget, signaling a clear intent to prioritize housing as part of national development goals in the coming fiscal year.

## DG ISPR warns unresolved tensions with India could spark conflict

**DG ISPR Gen Ahmed Sharif criticised India's arrogance and warned that its relentless hostility is a dangerous game, "playing with fire" that threatens regional peace**

By ISPR/Asghar Ali Mubarak

RAWALPINDI: The Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR), Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, stated that the core dispute between Pakistan and India remains unresolved and tensions could ignite at any moment. Speaking in an interview with a British broadcaster, he emphasized that an atomic war between the two countries would be sheer foolishness, leading only to mutual destruction. He described nuclear conflict as both unimaginable and irrational.

Lieutenant General Chaudhry stressed that Pakistan desires peace but is always prepared for war if imposed. He criticized India for its arrogance and ongoing hostile narrative, saying India is "playing with fire" by fueling this narrative. He accused India of fabricating false stories every few years to manipulate public opinion. He pointed out that the world now recognizes India's stance as baseless from the start. In recent events, Pakistan has responded with great maturity to avoid escalation, he said.

Regarding allegations of



Pakistani involvement in extremist incidents, he invited India to provide evidence so that Pakistan could take action internally. He reaffirmed Pakistan's preference for peace and its readiness for war if necessary. Lieutenant General Chaudhry also suggested India's rhetoric serves its internal politics, noting a lack of responsible political leadership willing to question the severe security lapses behind recent attacks.

He said India shows no interest in understanding the root causes and ignores voices highlighting injustice.

He revealed that after the attacks on May 6 and 7, India's Director General of Military Operations contacted Pakistan to initiate talks, but Pakistan insisted discussions would only happen after it had responded. Pakistan's response came

on the morning of May 10. He credited former US President Donald Trump's leadership and other international actors for helping de-escalate tensions, acknowledging India's public statements against further escalation.

DG ISPR rejected claims that Pakistan received prior warning of the attacks through Indian media, calling this narrative "laughable." He said Pakistan does not rely on Indian intelligence and can detect any Indian drone incursions immediately. He accused India of targeting mosques in Bahawalpur, Muridke and Muzaffarabad during its strikes and said India has no evidence or logic to back its accusations. Pakistan's government has challenged India to present proof, promising to investigate if any is provided, but India has refused to do so.

## Closure of Pakistani airspace to Indian flights extended

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has decided to extend the closure of its airspace to Indian flights for another month, a move that continues to strain aviation ties between the two neighbouring countries. Sources reveal that the ongoing ban has cost Indian airlines approximately 8 billion Pakistani rupees over the past month, highlighting the significant financial impact of this decision.

The extended detour around Pakistan's airspace has forced Indian carriers to take longer routes, resulting in an estimated 5 billion rupees being spent solely on additional fuel. This increase in flight duration has also led to further expenses, with airlines reportedly spending around 3 billion rupees on stopover costs as aircraft make unscheduled landings to refuel and manage crew changes.

## Arnab Goswami booked for spreading fake news

News Desk

NEW DEHLI: A case has been registered against Indian journalist Arnab Goswami and Amit Malviya, head of the IT department of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), over allegations of spreading false news. Indian media reports indicate that the complaint was filed by the Indian Youth Congress, accusing both individuals of deliberately disseminating misleading information. According to police officials, the complaint alleges that Goswami and Malviya coordinated efforts to circulate false narratives, which prompted authorities to initiate legal proceedings against them.

## First 'Field Marshal' in decades honored at GHQ ceremony

By ISPR

RAWALPINDI: The General Headquarters (GHQ) recently witnessed a rare and deeply symbolic event—a special guard of honor was held to celebrate the historic elevation of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, the first such promotion in decades. The ceremony took place at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada (Martyrs' Monument), where the newly appointed Field Marshal laid a floral wreath and offered prayers to honor the nation's fallen heroes.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) described the rank not as a personal achievement, but as a collective tribute to the people of Pakistan and the brave defenders who stood resolutely against India's unprovoked and illegal aggression. Field Marshal Munir dedicated this honor to civilians, armed forces personnel, and law enforcement agencies alike, recognizing



their sacrifices in safeguarding Pakistan's sovereignty and security.

Approved just a day before by the federal cabinet, Munir's promotion follows his pivotal role in Operation Bunyan Mursos, a military campaign credited with delivering a critical blow to forces threatening Pakistan's stability. The ceremony at the heart of Pakistan's military heritage underscored the enduring reverence for martyrdom and symbolized a renewed assertion of the military's moral and strategic authority amid a complex

geopolitical climate.

The revival of the Field Marshal rank has sparked nationwide conversations about its wider implications. Observers speculate whether this move signals a shift in regional military dynamics or primarily serves to bolster national morale during a period marked by both internal challenges and international tensions. As bugles echoed and the wreath rested solemnly at the monument, the ceremony reaffirmed a powerful truth embedded in Pakistan's military ethos: sacrifice is sacred.

## India declares Pak HC official persona non grata

News Desk

NEW DEHLI: The Indian Ministry of External Affairs has declared a Pakistani High Commission official persona non grata, ordering the diplomat to leave India within 24 hours. According to an official statement, the ministry accused the official of engaging in activities deemed inconsistent with their diplomatic status, though no further details were provided.

In a clear diplomatic rebuke, the Indian government summoned the Pakistani chargé d'affaires to deliver a formal demarche, underscoring the seriousness of the matter. This move marks a significant escalation in the already tense relations between the two neighboring countries, reflecting ongoing strains in their diplomatic engagement.

## Israeli gunfire targets European diplomats in Occupied West Bank

News Desk

OCCUPIED BAITUL MAQDAS: Tensions escalated sharply in the occupied West Bank as Israeli forces opened fire near a European diplomatic delegation visiting Jenin camp. The diplomats, who had arrived to assess the damage caused by recent Israeli military operations, were forced to flee for their safety after warning shots were fired.

According to the Israeli military, the shots were intended as warnings after the delegation allegedly deviated from an approved route and attempted to enter a restricted area. Officials insisted no injuries or damage resulted from the incident and said they were in contact with diplomats from multiple countries to manage the fallout. This incident comes



amid a relentless wave of Israeli military assaults on Gaza, where the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate rapidly. Since the morning of the attack, more than 50 Palestinians have been reported killed, compounding the crisis already deepened by a tight Israeli blockade. Since March 2, the blockade has contributed to the deaths of at least 326 Palestinians from starvation and deprivation, according to UN estimates.

The United Nations has issued a grave warning that without urgent food deliveries, the lives of 14,000 children in Gaza hang in the balance. In a rare diplomatic development, the United Arab Emirates and Israel have reached an agreement to permit limited humanitarian aid into the besieged territory. UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed held discussions with his Israeli counterpart, with talks reportedly touching on a potential ceasefire.

## Bilawal felicitates GB residents as Dogra-era law finally repealed

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), has extended his congratulations to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan following the historic abolition of the controversial Khalsa Sarkar law—a relic of the Dogra Raj era that had long cast a shadow over the region. This landmark move restores the right to land ownership to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, marking the end of decades of injustice and legal restric-



tions that had denied them fundamental property rights. Speaking on the occasion, Bilawal recalled how the oppressive legacy of this law was entrenched by General Zia-ul-Haq, who overturned the land reforms introduced by Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and imposed the Khalsa Sarkar law through

the Gilgit-Baltistan Act of 1979. The impact was profound: millions of residents were stripped of their rightful ownership, fueling resentment and sparking a long struggle for justice.

The PPP chairman highlighted that the persistent efforts and political will, especially from his party, have finally borne fruit. He acknowledged the crucial support from all political parties in the ruling coalition, whose backing was instrumental in the passage of the Gilgit-Baltistan Land Rights Bill.

This collective effort, he said, represents a significant step towards securing economic and social rights for the people of the region.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari pledged that the PPP remains steadfast in its commitment to stand with Gilgit-Baltistan.

He assured that future policies and decisions will continue to align with the aspirations of its people, underlining the party's ongoing dedication to addressing historic grievances and fostering progress in the region.

## Gladiators triumph over United to reach final

By our correspondent

LAHORE: Quetta Gladiators have stamped their authority on Pakistan Super League Season 10 by securing a place in the final after a commanding 30-run victory over Islamabad United in the first qualifier at Lahore's Qaddafi Stadium.

Chasing a challenging target of 210 runs, Islamabad United fell short, being bowled out for 179 runs. Despite valiant efforts from Sahibzada Farhan, who scored a resilient 52, and Agha Salman's solid



44, the team could not match the Gladiators' total on a pitch that proved demanding for the batsmen. The Gladiators' innings had its own moments of turbulence. After losing five

wickets for just 113 runs, expectations of posting a competitive total seemed uncertain. However, a determined partnership between Faheem Ashraf and Chundamal revived the in-

nings. Ashraf's aggressive 45 combined with Chundamal's unbeaten 48, which featured six sixes and eight fours, pushed the score to a formidable 209 for 6 in their allotted 20 overs.

Earlier contributions came from Fen Allen with 41 runs and Ayushka Fernando's steady 32, while captain Saud Shakeel chipped in with 12. The sixth-wicket stand of 95 runs between Ashraf and Chundamal proved decisive, transforming the innings and ultimately setting a target that proved too

steep for Islamabad United.

Islamabad's bowling attack was led by Ben Dwarshes and Salman Irshad, who claimed two wickets each, supported by Imad Wasim and Shadab Khan, who took a wicket apiece. Despite their efforts, the defending champions could not contain the Gladiators' late surge. Winning the toss, Quetta Gladiators' captain Saud Shakeel chose to bat first, expressing confidence in his team's ability to put up a strong performance and secure a victory.

## Sindh task force highlights accountability to end polio

By our correspondent

KARACHI: At a meeting of the anti-polio task force chaired by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, the need for accountability at every level was strongly emphasized. The chief minister said any child who misses polio drops could potentially become a patient. Polio cannot be eliminated through routine measures alone; targeted, urgent, and coordinated actions are necessary.

The chief minister said the fight against polio is fundamentally a battle of trust, equity, and access. Parents, religious scholars, teachers, and frontline workers must work together to ensure every child receives the polio drops every time.

Health Minister informed the chief minister that so far in 2025, ten wild poliovirus cases have been reported in Pakistan, four of which are from Sindh. She added that among 35 sewage samples collected between



7 and 24 April, 11 tested positive for wild poliovirus, indicating ongoing virus circulation.

Minister said the May campaign will reach over 10.6 million children under five years of age across 1,292 union councils in all 30 districts of Sindh. More than 80,000 trained frontline workers and 25,539 law enforcement personnel, including female police constables, will support the campaign. Children aged six to 59 months will also receive vitamin A drops to boost immunity, especially during the season when the virus spreads rapidly. The meeting was at-

tended by Health Minister Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani, Chief Secretary Asif Haider Shah, Secretary Health Rehan Baloch, Secretary Chief Minister Zaman Nario, Secretary Colleges Shahab Ansari, Karachi Mayor Mur-taza Wahab, IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, Additional IG Karachi Javed Odho, WHO Consultant Dr Salah Haismi, Senior Program Officer Maria May from BMGF, CEO PPHI Javed Jageerani, representatives of partner organizations, and members of the Sindh Emergency Operations Center.