

# India thanks US for facilitating peace with Pakistan

Shankar dismissed rumors of international interference in India-Pakistan talks, emphasizing the renewed hotline as a direct and sovereign channel for dialogue

News Desk

NEW DEHLI: India's External Affairs Minister, Jayant Shankar, has publicly acknowledged the role played by the United States in helping reduce tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad, offering rare clarity on the behind-the-scenes diplomacy that helped avert a deeper crisis in South Asia.

Speaking during a recent interview, Shankar addressed growing speculation about international involvement in the ongoing India-Pakistan dialogue, particularly in the wake of a recently activated hotline between the two countries. While he emphasized that communication between India and Pakistan remains direct and sovereign, he made it clear that Washington's engagement was significant.

According to Shankar,



Vice President J.D. Vence maintained contact with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the critical phase of talks, while U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio was actively engaged in discussions with Indian officials. At the same time, American diplomatic channels remained open to Islamabad, with U.S. envoys reaching out to Pakistani leadership in a parallel track of communication.

The foreign minister was careful, however, to place

Washington's role within a broader international context. He noted that the U.S. was not acting alone, pointing to efforts from multiple nations who expressed concern and attempted to facilitate stability. "When two large and neighboring countries face friction, it is only natural for the international community to show interest and offer support," he said, underlining the diplomatic norms that guide such interventions.

Despite these interna-

tional efforts, Shankar was unequivocal in asserting that the ceasefire was ultimately the result of a direct agreement between India and Pakistan. "The decision to step back from the brink was ours to make. The ceasefire is a bilateral arrangement, shaped through our own channels and for our own regional interest," he said.

His comments came at a time when both countries remain under intense scrutiny from their own citizens and from observers abroad, many of whom continue to question the stability of the fragile peace. The acknowledgment of U.S. involvement offers insight into the diplomatic balancing act being performed by New Delhi—reassuring domestic audiences of its sovereignty while recognizing the strategic value of international partnerships in de-escalating potentially volatile situations.

## K-Electric's fuel cost plea awaits NEPRA ruling

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has concluded the public hearing on K-Electric's monthly fuel cost adjustment for March and reserved its decision. The hearing, chaired by NEPRA's chairman, focused on K-Electric's request to reduce the fuel cost adjustment (FCA) by Rs5.02 per unit.

NEPRA clarified that if approved, the reduction would apply only to June bills and would affect all K-Electric consumers, excluding those in the lifeline and protected categories. Prepaid users and electric vehicle charging stations would also benefit from the adjustment. NEPRA stated it would review further data before issuing a detailed ruling.



During the hearing, consumers expressed frustration, claiming that NEPRA fails to enforce its own consumer service rules. Many said their electricity bills remain unexamined despite repeated complaints, while severe load-shedding has hit Karachi with the onset of summer. Questions were raised about why NEPRA has not penalized K-Electric for the worsening power outages.

A NEPRA member questioned K-Electric officials on the inconsistency of power cuts, pointing out that connections remain uninterrupted in winter but load-shedding intensifies in summer. The member challenged K-Electric's distribution conditions, saying the reality on the ground contradicts the company's claims.

Concerns were also raised over K-Electric's stockpile of Rs500 million worth of furnace oil. NEPRA asked why the plants are not operational despite the available fuel. K-Electric responded that the stock is needed as a backup, to run alternative plants if any unit shuts down. The Karachi Chamber of Commerce representative urged NEPRA to find solutions to the crippling load-shedding during the hot months.

# 3Cs blame India-backed proxies for Khuzdar carnage

Field Marshal Munir hailed the steadfast support of the Pakistani people as the vital backbone of the nation's armed forces

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

RAWALPINDI: The recent Core Commanders Conference (CCC), chaired by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, strongly condemned the brutal attack in Khuzdar that claimed the lives of four innocent children and two civilians. The conference described the incident as a heinous act carried out by proxies supported and backed by India.

The meeting began with a solemn tribute to the martyrs of Operation Bunyan Marsos and those lost in the Khuzdar terrorist attack. Participants reiterated that targeting innocent civilians and children is a grave violation of humanity and international law. Field Marshal Munir praised the unwavering support of the Pakistani people, calling them the true source of the armed forces' strength.



Munir affirmed the military's resolve to counter external aggression, terrorism, and extremism with the full confidence of the nation behind them. The forum acknowledged the sacrifices of those who laid down their lives defending Pakistan's sovereignty against India's unprovoked aggression, vowing that their blood would not be shed in vain. Protecting the people remains the armed forces' highest priority.

Commanders recognized the strategic leadership and steadfast vision of the army chief, congratulating him on receiving the prestigious field marshal rank. They reviewed the current security environment and highlighted the success of Operation Bunyan Marsos, praising the armed forces' professionalism, coordination, and the public's strong support.

The conference also commended the role of Pakistani media and information warriors for standing firm against Indian propaganda, misinformation, and war hysteria. Their efforts in presenting facts accurately and maintaining public confidence were widely appreciated.

Pakistani youth's energy and active participation were

celebrated for uplifting the national spirit and effectively promoting the country's narrative. Political leadership was also praised for its foresight and unwavering guidance during this critical phase.

The commanders stressed that India's continued use of proxy groups to destabilize Pakistan, including recent attacks masked by incidents like the Pahalgam event, will not be tolerated.

India was described as the true perpetrator of terrorism and regional instability, despite portraying itself as a victim. The forum underlined the close coordination between armed forces, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement to firmly confront terrorist proxies and their facilitators, vowing to eliminate elements spreading fear and unrest.

## Bilawal discusses Pak-US ties with US envoy

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), recently met with the US chargé d'affaires Natalie Baker at Zardari House in Islamabad, where discussions centered on reinforcing the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and the United States. The meeting reflected a shared intent to deepen cooperation across various fronts, signaling an ongoing commitment to diplomatic engagement amid a complex regional landscape.

During the conversation, Bilawal Bhutto



Zardari acknowledged the role of former US President Donald Trump in facilitating the recent ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan, describing it as a commendable effort. This recognition highlighted the PPP leader's appreciation for the diplomatic interventions that have contributed to easing tensions in South Asia, a region frequently marked by volatility.

The PPP chairman also underscored Pakistan's desire to stabilize and expand trade relations with the United States, indicating a focus on economic collaboration as a vital component of the bilateral agenda. He stressed that improving trade ties would not only benefit Pakistan's economy but also strengthen mutual interests, fostering a more resilient partnership.

Furthermore, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari reiterated Pakistan's commitment to working alongside the United States to address and resolve regional conflicts. He emphasized that cooperation between the two countries is essential for promoting peace and stability in a region fraught with challenges. This statement echoed a broader diplomatic vision that views collaboration as the key to achieving long-term security and prosperity.

The meeting at Zardari House thus showcased both parties' readiness to engage constructively, reflecting an understanding that sustained dialogue and partnership remain crucial as Pakistan and the United States navigate shared geopolitical and economic concerns.

# Israeli Embassy attack reignites global anger over Gaza offensive

A regional analyst cited the 1996 Israel embassy bombing in London—first blamed on Palestinians, but later traced by MI6 to Mossad—as a cautionary tale in the politics of blame

News Desk

WASHINGTON: The fatal shooting of two Israeli Embassy employees in Washington has intensified global scrutiny of Israel's actions in Gaza, with fresh outrage directed at what many see as an unchecked campaign of terror against Palestinian civilians.

Elias Rodriguez, 31, of Chicago, is now facing charges of first-degree murder and terrorism-related offenses after allegedly killing Yaron Lischinsky, 30, and Sarah Milgrim, 26, during a high-profile Jewish reception at the Capital Jewish Museum on Wednesday night. Upon arrest, Rodriguez reportedly told police: "I did it for Palestine, I did it for Gaza."



These words have not only propelled federal prosecutors to classify the case as a potential hate crime and act of domestic terrorism, but they've also sparked renewed debate over the United States' complicity in the Gaza conflict.

One of the Middle East experts called into question the dominant narrative being pushed in US media. One prominent regional analyst recalled the 1996 bombing outside Israel's London em-

bassy, which was initially blamed on Palestinian activists but later revealed by MI6 to be the handiwork of Mossad itself. "History has taught us that immediate conclusions often mask deeper geopolitical manipulations," the analyst said. Mossad's bombing at Israeli embassy in London, Israel's the then government successfully achieve its political score.

The brutality of the Washington attack, described in an FBI affidavit, revealed that Milgrim was shot repeatedly while attempting to escape. Federal agents raided Rodriguez's home in tactical gear, retrieving evidence, including the 9mm handgun believed

to have been used. Rodriguez had flown to Washington just a day earlier with the weapon checked in his luggage, suggesting a calculated plan of action.

Though the incident is undeniably tragic, it is unfolding against the backdrop of what many humanitarian observers have condemned as a mass massacre in Gaza. Since October, over 35,000 Palestinians—many of them children and women—have been killed in relentless Israeli airstrikes, while food, water, and medical supplies remain blocked. Entire neighborhoods have been reduced to rubble as the world watches in silence, or worse, in complicity.

# Pakistanis, Indians unite in song for peace in London

News Desk

LONDON: In the heart of London, far from the sub-continent's borders and political barbs, citizens of Pakistan and India stood side by side, offering a moment of unity that felt almost unimaginable against the backdrop of their nations' enduring tensions. Just days ago, in a modest but moving public gathering, people from both countries came together not in protest, but in peace—singing, embracing, and imagining a future unburdened by hostility.

Amid the chill of a typical British spring, the warmth was unmistakable. Men, women, and children arrived draped in green and saffron, holding their flags not in opposition, but in tandem. What unfolded was not choreographed by governments or scripted by diplomats, but shaped by the quiet determi-



nation of ordinary people. They sang peace songs in unison. They recited both national anthems with respect. And for a brief, luminous moment, they laid down the narratives of enmity to make space for a common dream.

The event may have lacked grandeur, but its message rang louder than any official summit. The smiles exchanged, the hugs shared, and the laughter that echoed were more than gestures—they were acts of

resistance against the politics of division. As one young woman said with a tearful smile, "We grew up hearing we were enemies. But here, we're just people. Just neighbors who want peace."

There were no speeches from politicians. No media frenzy. No security barricades. Just citizens, shoulder to shoulder, determined to remind themselves and each other that diplomacy doesn't only belong to governments.

## Indian forces kill two young men in Kashmir

News Desk

JAMMU, IIOJ&K: State violence by Indian forces continues in occupied Kashmir, with two young men reportedly killed in the Kishtwar district, according to local Kashmiri media.

The youths were targeted under the guise of a search and cordon operation, a tactic frequently used by Indian forces in the region.

Reports from Srinagar say the area was sealed off before house-to-house searches were launched.

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Pakistan's economic recovery and long-term development. In a recent meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the IMF delegation expressed satisfaction with the progress Pakistan has made under the ongoing economic reform program.

The Fund acknowledged Pakistan's strides in stabilizing the economy and signaled its readiness to remain a reliable partner in its path to fiscal sustainability. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, for his part, underscored that Pakistan is now shifting from stabilization to growth. He vowed to accelerate the momentum on both macroeconomic and institutional reforms, pledging that his government will maintain discipline and transparency as it pursues structural improvements in key sectors.

The prime minister also held a separate high-level meeting with a delegation from the World Bank, led by Managing Director of Opera-



tions, Ana Bejar De. In the meeting, Shehbaz Sharif hailed the World Bank as a crucial development partner, noting that the partnership has paved the way for over \$20 billion in planned development investments across Pakistan. He stressed that practical measures are already being rolled out to ensure that the impact of these investments is felt directly by the public, particularly in underserved areas.

Shehbaz Sharif also took the opportunity to reflect on the 2022 floods, which displaced millions and inflicted widespread damage to infrastructure and livelihoods. He praised the World Bank's swift and substantial support for flood victims, saying the international community's

solidarity had been vital during the crisis. World Bank Managing Director Ana Bejar De commended Pakistan's recent macroeconomic progress, describing its stability as "exemplary."

MD WB reaffirmed the World Bank's commitment to deepen collaboration with Pakistan and highlighted the positive trajectory of reforms being implemented under their country partnership framework. The meeting was also attended by World Bank Country Director Najee Benhassine, key federal ministers, and members of parliament, reflecting the depth of multilateral engagement as Pakistan seeks to steer itself toward sustainable development and inclusive growth.

# Rahul calls on Modi to move beyond rhetoric on key issues

News Desk

NEW DEHLI: Rahul Gandhi, the senior leader of India's Congress Party and opposition figure in the Lok Sabha, has openly challenged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to stop what he describes as "empty speeches" and provide concrete answers on key issues affecting India's national dignity and foreign policy.

Addressing Modi directly, Gandhi demanded clarity on three pressing questions that have become focal points in the political debate following recent developments in the India-Pakistan ceasefire. Gandhi's criticism comes



after a brief period of opposition support for Modi's government during Operation Sindoor, an initiative aimed at de-escalating tensions along the border.

However, this goodwill quickly dissipated following the announcement of the

ceasefire, with Gandhi intensifying his attacks, accusing Modi of failing to protect India's interests on the international stage. On the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, Gandhi called on Modi to move beyond rhetoric and respond di-

rectly to his pointed queries.

His first question highlighted concern over Modi's apparent acceptance of Pakistan's official statements on terrorism without sufficient skepticism, suggesting a troubling lack of assertiveness. The second questioned why Modi appeared to prioritize appeasing former US President Donald Trump, even if it meant compromising India's own interests and dignity.

Gandhi's third query accused Modi of showing outrage only when cameras are present, implying that his public displays of anger are more performative than substantive.



# Govt seeks IMF relief for real estate, salaried workers

Salaried workers and key sectors urge IMF for urgent financial relief amid mounting economic pressures and growing hardship

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) engage in delicate negotiations over the 2025-26 budget, the government has formally sought relief measures aimed at easing pressure on the real estate sector and salaried individuals. Sources familiar with the discussions reveal that Islamabad has requested a reduction in the super tax rate alongside concessions for property, construction, and allied industries.

These demands form part of a broader appeal from various economic sectors, including the salaried class, each seeking financial



respite amid growing economic challenges. So far, the IMF has neither accepted nor rejected these requests, maintaining a cautious stance while seeking more clarity. According to insiders at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the tax authority's annual revenue target for the coming fiscal

year is expected to be set with two key components in mind.

The government has proposed a revenue target exceeding 14 trillion Pakistani rupees, a figure that reflects ambitious expectations amid a strained economy. FBR officials also note that the IMF is closely examining poten-

tial revenues from ongoing legal cases related to tax disputes. Currently, tax-related cases amounting to approximately 770 billion rupees are pending across various courts, with decisions on cases worth around 250 billion rupees expected by the end of June.

The remaining 500 billion rupees in contested amounts may only be resolved in the next fiscal year. This backlog of cases presents both a challenge and an opportunity for Pakistan's revenue authorities, as pending court rulings could significantly impact tax collections. Despite these developments, sources indicate that no firm agreement has yet been

reached between Pakistan's economic team and the IMF regarding tax relief measures.

The government remains committed to honoring its obligations under the IMF program, with any final decisions expected to be mutually agreed upon. The fund continues to request detailed data, comprehensive revenue strategies, and assurances from Islamabad before considering concessions. Alongside discussions about tax relief, the IMF has reiterated its calls for Pakistan to reduce provincial expenditures, enhance overall revenue collection, and take concrete steps to enforce agricultural income tax.

# Industrial leaders hold talks with Karachi's top traffic officials

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: The Association of Trade and Industries – Federal B Industrial Area hosted a meeting with Karachi's top traffic official. The event brought together DIG Traffic Karachi Pir Muhammad Shah and SSP Traffic Central Qamar Abbas Rizvi with key representatives from the industrial area, including its President Sheikh Muhammad Tahseen, Vice President Abdullah Abid, and CEO Development Babar.

The delegation raised long-standing concerns about the lack of pedestrian infrastructure in the area, particularly the absence of zebra crossings and pedestrian bridges on major roads. They noted that this gap puts women and children at risk and has led to frequent accidents. The delegation also expressed



a strong desire to see Federal B Industrial Area developed into a model industrial zone and assured full cooperation with the city's traffic police in achieving this goal.

DIG Traffic Karachi thanked the organizers for the invitation and responded positively to the proposals. "We will resolve all problems together," he said. "Traffic police is committed to modernizing our systems in line with present-day needs and technology." He highlighted that advanced cameras are being installed on key roads across the city to aid in traffic management.

These cameras will also enable the implementation of faceless ticketing — a system aimed at reducing direct confrontations and increasing transparency.

DIG Rizvi also stressed the importance of road safety training. As part of new measures, drivers seeking heavy transport vehicle (HTV) licences will now be required to complete a 30-hour training course. Responding to the delegation's suggestions, he added, "Your proposals are excellent, and traffic police will fully cooperate with you in making Federal B Industrial Area safer and better managed."

# Sukkur commissioner urges united front to end polio

By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: Commissioner of Sukkur Division, Fayaz Hussain Abbasi, has called for stronger coordination between departments to eliminate polio, stressing that the fight against the virus must be treated as a shared national duty, not just another government assignment.

Chairing a meeting of the divisional task force on polio eradication, Commissioner

DC, and his own office.

"The work of polio teams is not a job, it is a service to the nation," he said, calling for better administrative skills among health officials. He warned that failing to utilize field staff during campaigns reflects poorly on local leadership and directed disciplinary action against absentee health employees, with reports to be filed with higher authorities.

Abbasi also ordered the regional director of the Peo-



ple's Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) to ensure that all EPI centers in the division are fully functional. Many of these centers, which are under PPHI's supervision, have faced staffing shortages, leaving communities underserved.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from health, education, WHO, law enforcement, and representatives from PPHI, including DIG Sukkur Faisal Abdullah Chachar, DC Sukkur Dr M.B. Raja Dharejo, DC Khairpur Fayaz Hussain Rahujo, DC Ghotki Syed Muhammad Ali, Health Director Dr Nadeem, and PPHI Regional Director Sirajuddin.

ple's Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) to ensure that all EPI centers in the division are fully functional. Many of these centers, which are under PPHI's supervision, have faced staffing shortages, leaving communities underserved.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from health, education, WHO, law enforcement, and representatives from PPHI, including DIG Sukkur Faisal Abdullah Chachar, DC Sukkur Dr M.B. Raja Dharejo, DC Khairpur Fayaz Hussain Rahujo, DC Ghotki Syed Muhammad Ali, Health Director Dr Nadeem, and PPHI Regional Director Sirajuddin.

# CPPG leads high-level policy forum at FCCU Lahore

By our correspondent

LAHORE: The Centre for Public Policy and Governance (CPPG) at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) convened a landmark two-day conference titled "Challenges and Transformations in Contemporary Pakistan" on 21-22 May 2025, drawing together a rich mix of academics, policymakers, practitioners, and students for critical discussions on the nation's most urgent issues.

Opening the event, Rector Dr. Jonathan Addleton stressed the urgency of informed dialogue in navigating Pakistan's complex political and social terrain. His remarks set the tone for what became a forum marked by intellectual rigor and a commitment to constructive engagement.

The conference unfolded across eight thematic sessions, with discussions spanning governance and democratic transitions, gender equality, urban development,

social entrepreneurship, migration, terrorism and counter-terrorism strategies, climate change, and youth employability. These sessions reflected the multi-dimensional crises facing Pakistan today, and the need for integrated, forward-looking solutions.

Distinguished Pakistani academics and public figures led the panels, while international scholars from Iceland, the United Kingdom, and the United States joined virtually to offer comparative insights.

**Al- Syed Makki Madni**  
Travels & Tours Pvt Ltd.

**20 دن**  
**مکمل عمرہ پیکہ**  
D-15  
1640H 2024-2025

**20 اپیشل مَحَرَّم / صَفَر عُمَرِی گروپ پیج**  
**198500**  
QUINT **204800** QUAD **218700**  
TRIPLE **235000** DOUBLE **252400**  
ڈائریکٹ ایئر لائن

**مفت زیارت**  
پیدل کار سٹریٹنگ و مشنس  
850 میٹر 850 میٹر

**زیارت مکہ مکرمہ**  
زیارت طائف  
زیارت بدر  
زیارت مدینہ منورہ

**گروپ روٹ:** 30 محرم، 5 صفر، 10 محرم  
**Air Tickets: Umrah: Visa / Others:**  
Contact: Abdul Ghaffar Gaba Cell No. 0335-1305662  
0313-2675926

UAN 111 786 800  
alsyedgroupasg  
alsyedgroup  
alsyedgroups.com

Shop No. 1, Plot # C1-56, Sector II-E, Chowringi No. 5, Orangi Town, Karachi, Pakistan.

## METRO MATTERS

### Top Khawarij-linked operatives captured in Karachi

News Desk

KARACHI: In a major counter-terrorism breakthrough, three highly wanted militants affiliated with the proscribed Fitna al-Khawarij group were arrested during a joint operation by Pakistan Rangers Sindh and the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in Mehran Town, Korangi, Karachi. According to a Rangers spokesperson, the operation was based on classified intelligence and led to the recovery of weapons, ammunition, and explosive materials.

The arrested suspects have been identified as Noor Muhammad, Nimetullah, and Saberullah, all of whom were reportedly trained militants deployed to Karachi with clear directives to carry out extortion, targeted killings, and terrorist attacks. These individuals are linked to commander Roman Rais and the Islam Deen faction of Fitna al-Khawarij.

Noor Muhammad was allegedly involved in multiple acts of extortion, target killings, and pre-attack surveillance of key locations in the city. Investigators claim he joined the Islam Deen group in 2022 and has been actively engaged in planning violent activities.

Nimetullah, described as a long-time operative, admitted to joining the Mufti Noor Wali faction of the group in 2018. He received military training in Afghanistan and was involved in terrorist operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He had also been previously arrested in 2019 for terrorism-related charges.

Meanwhile, Saberullah, another militant tied to the Mufti Noor Wali group since 2018, is said to have been responsible for disseminating videos and propaganda images of Fitna al-Khawarij's activities across social media. Authorities believe he was actively plotting attacks in Karachi.

### MQM-P senator accuses Sindh govt of ignoring water woes

By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: Senior leader of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P), Senator Nasreen Jalil, has voiced strong condemnation of the ongoing severe water crisis in Karachi. In a forceful statement, she accused the Sindh government and the Water Corporation of deliberately neglecting the city's water infrastructure, resulting in widespread shortages that leave residents without essential water supplies for weeks.

Senator Jalil described frequent pipe bursts and prolonged disruptions as a reflection of "clear ill intent" by those in authority. She further criticized what she termed a collusive alliance between the provincial government, Water Corporation, and the tanker mafia, which she blamed for exacerbating the crisis during a period of extreme heat when access to water is critical.

Highlighting the economic significance of Karachi, she lamented the deliberate deprivation of water in vital areas including Landhi, Korangi, Malir, Shah Faisal Colony, Mahmoodabad, Burns Road, Lyari, Baldia Town, Orangi, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Gulistan-e-Johar, Nazimabad, North Karachi, and Surjani Town. According to her, these areas have been sacrificed to serve vested interests, while Karachi, the backbone of Pakistan's economy, continues to pay heavy taxes from pipelines to ports yet remains neglected.

Senator Jalil called upon the federal government to urgently intervene and address the crisis, stressing the need to restore water access and alleviate the suffering of Karachi's residents. She urged immediate action to heal the wounds of a metropolis she described as betrayed by bias and malice.

### Zahid Chaner assumes leadership of Sukkur board

By our correspondent

KARACHI: Professor Zahid Chaner, the dean at Sindh Madressa Islamia University, has been appointed as the new chairman of the Sukkur Board, marking a significant transition in the board's leadership. His appointment follows the completion of two years by the former chairman, Rafiq Ahmad Pal, who stepped down and chose not to pursue his legal case, resulting in the dismissal of his petition by the court.

Professor Chaner's selection came after a thorough recommendation process conducted by the search committee, which identified him as the suitable candidate to lead the board. However, his formal appointment faced delays due to ongoing legal proceedings and a stay order initiated by the former chairman, which had temporarily halted the leadership transition.

With the legal obstacles now removed, Professor Chaner is set to assume his new role as chairman of the Sukkur Board. His leadership is expected to bring fresh direction and stability to the board's operations, as he takes charge amid hopes for continued progress in educational administration and governance in the region.

### Sindh PA debates Karachi illegal construction fiasco

By Salman Shah

KARACHI: In a recent session of the Sindh Assembly, lawmakers engaged in a heated discussion over the growing menace of illegal constructions across Karachi and the pervasive corruption that enables them. MQM-P's MPA Fozia Hameed raised pressing questions about accountability, asking how many government officials had responded to show-cause notices and how many had actually faced consequences.

Fozia Hameed pushed for stricter penalties, arguing that fines must be hefty enough to dissuade bribery and corruption. Responding to the concerns, Provincial Minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani admitted that illegal construction was perhaps the most pressing issue facing Karachi—one that extended well beyond the city's central district. He acknowledged the depth of the problem and announced that demolition operations would be outsourced to third-party contractors in a bid to seal off the avenues for bribery within government departments.

Ghani reiterated that outsourcing would allow the government to distance itself from operational loopholes that enable corruption. MQM-P's Jamal Ahmed questioned the absence of the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) during the construction phase and called for better disaster preparedness, especially in the event of earthquakes. He urged the government to launch awareness campaigns, to which Ghani responded that such campaigns had been initiated and would be amplified through advertisements and grassroots outreach via local representatives.

The issue of institutional responsibility came into focus when MQM-P's Adil Askari bluntly asked who should be held accountable for Karachi's illegal buildings. Ghani deflected blame onto the past, pointing out that the problem had persisted over the last 17 years, even during periods when MQM-P itself was part of the ruling coalition. Hameed, however, fired back, branding the SBCA as "the most corrupt department in the province."

Ghani maintained that the provincial government was genuinely committed to tackling the crisis. He underscored the plan to transfer inspection duties to third-party bodies as part of systemic reforms. Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami's Mohammad Farooq stressed the city's vastness and SBCA's limited capacity, calling for the introduction of a tech-based oversight system. Ghani confirmed that an online complaint platform was already active, with 670 complaints filed to date.

### Greenwich University hosts panel on combating fake news

By Our Correspondent

KARACHI: The Department of Media, Art & Design at Greenwich University organised a compelling panel discussion titled "Navigating Fake News in the Digital Era" on Thursday at its DHA campus. The event brought together prominent journalists, editors, and media professionals to address the growing challenge of misinformation and disinformation in Pakistan's rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Held in the university auditorium, the event attracted a diverse audience including students, scholars, and media practitioners, all of whom participated in insightful discussions around journalistic ethics, the responsibilities of the media, and the crucial role of digital literacy. The discussion was divided into two sessions. The first, moderated by Dr. Sundus Basharat Ahmad, Assistant Professor at DHA Suffa University, featured senior journalists such as Mubashir Mir, Mazhar Abbas, Tariq Moin Siddiqui, and Syeda Hoor Shumail.

This session highlighted the rapid spread of misinformation and emphasized the ethical obligation of journalists to uphold fact-based, impartial reporting. The second session, led by broadcast journalist Iqbal Jamil, focused on digital journalism and media literacy. Panelists included Manzoor Naqvi, Syed Khalid Mehmood, Muhammad Nazakat Ali, and Ali Asghar.

The panel discussed strategies to detect and counter fake news on social media and called for stronger collaboration among media outlets, academic institutions, and civil society to nurture critical thinking and protect the integrity of information.

An interactive question-and-answer session allowed attendees to engage directly with the panelists, fostering a lively exchange of ideas. In closing remarks, Iqbal Jamil and Greenwich University faculty reaffirmed their commitment to promoting ethical journalism and announced plans to organize further initiatives aimed at advancing responsible media practices in Pakistan.



**EDITOR: Ehtasham Anwar**  
**Vol. No. 2**  
**Issue. No. 157**  
**Email: news@metro-morning.com**  
**Ziqad 25, 1446 A.H.**



# Bangladesh’s hopeful uncertainty?

The future is uncertain and in that uncertainty lies both a warning and an opportunity. Bangladesh stands at a crossroads, its path unclear and people anxious. Questions swirl like a restless wind, and despite the country’s many achievements, there is a growing unease that something vital is being lost amid the noise and turmoil. The nation asks itself if it is truly moving forward or merely spinning in place. Yet the signs suggest that the direction may be wrong, or at least dangerously unclear. This is not merely a matter of politics—it is a question of survival and identity. No nation can flourish under a heavy cloud of doubt. Bangladesh is rushing headlong into an unpredictable future, and the price of missteps will be paid by ordinary citizens whose hopes and livelihoods depend on stability, clarity, and progress.

The responsibility for this uncertain trajectory must be confronted frankly. When a government is swayed too much by external pressures or internal factionalism, it risks losing sight of the people it serves. The current administration under Dr. Yunus, despite its many promises and potential, seems caught in such a web of influence and indecision. Politics, after all, is not simply a game of power; it demands vision, coherence, and a steady hand. There is no doubt that Dr. Yunus himself commands respect. He is a figure of considerable stature, and Bangladesh is fortunate to have such a leader at the helm in these turbulent times. Yet leadership is more than the sum of one person’s qualities. The government as a whole must embody the hopes of the nation, understanding deeply the aspirations and frustrations of its people.

On this front, the current administration struggles. The signs of disconnect are troubling. Political advisers, for instance, are meant to be pillars of impartial wisdom, but instead some appear as agents of factional interests, further eroding public trust. When advisors, who hold the government’s confidence, serve partisan agendas or lack the energy to meet the demands of governance, it is the country that suffers. The call for generational renewal is more than a cliché—it is a necessity if Bangladesh is to harness the full potential of its talents and ideas. It is important to acknowledge the valuable role played by Bangladeshis living abroad, the NRBs, who carry with them expertise and perspective. Their contributions are welcomed and indeed vital to the country’s development.

However, when it comes to matters of national security and unity, experience and grounded understanding are non-negotiable. Here, controversy has arisen. Figures like Dr. Khalil Rahman have stirred public concern not only by questioning government policies but also by revealing their own lack of practical insight into Bangladesh’s complex social fabric. Similarly, Dr. Ali Riyaz, despite his international experience, has struggled to bridge the divides that threaten the nation’s cohesion. These individuals, while intelligent, have shown an inadequate grasp of the realities on the ground. The fear is that Bangladesh could become an unwitting participant in wider proxy conflicts, a prospect that alarms even the country’s military leaders.

The announcement of a humanitarian corridor for Rohingya refugees, intended as a humanitarian gesture, has instead heightened anxieties about national security and the delicate balance of regional politics. The political revolution of July 2024 was a watershed moment for Bangladesh. It reshaped the landscape and sparked hope that the country might finally break free from cycles of stagnation and crisis. The people entrusted Dr. Yunus’s government with their aspirations, yearning for a future marked by justice, prosperity, and national dignity. But that trust is fragile, and it is beginning to erode. Doubt has seeped into public discourse, replaced the early optimism with unease. Political parties, which should be instruments of unity and progress, remain ensnared in their own divisions and agendas.

The opposition, particularly the BNP and Jamaat, have yet to demonstrate the mature leadership expected in such critical times. Instead, their actions often reflect narrow political calculations rather than a broader commitment to the nation’s welfare. The emergence of the National Citizen Party (NCP) has brought its own set of challenges. While fresh political voices are essential for any democracy, the NCP’s repeated missteps and perceived immaturity risk undermining its credibility. Many now dismiss the party as a “children’s party,” a label that may be unfair but underscores the urgent need for patience, discipline, and deeper understanding before assuming a leadership role. Despite these setbacks, there is a silver lining. The recent political shifts have unsettled the entrenched parties, forcing a hard reckoning with the realities of governance and survival.

There is a growing awareness among leaders that national unity is not a luxury but a fundamental necessity. Without it, no party can hope to sustain itself or guide the country through the challenges ahead. This dawning realization offers a glimmer of hope that Bangladesh might yet nurture a political culture rooted in collaboration, respect, and a shared vision for the future. The crisis facing Bangladesh today is unprecedented in its complexity and scale. The BNP must summon the courage to move beyond factionalism and petty rivalries, embracing a mature role that protects the country from external manipulation and reclaims its position as a genuine national force. Jamaat and the National Citizen Party, too, have roles to play if Bangladesh is to avoid further fragmentation and decline. Their leadership is urgently needed to foster unity and safeguard the nation’s sovereignty in a world fraught with geopolitical tensions. The path ahead is uncertain, yes. But it is not predetermined. Bangladesh’s future depends on the choices made now—in boardrooms and parliaments, on streets and in villages, by leaders and citizens alike. Will the country stumble deeper into chaos and distrust, or will it find the courage to build bridges, uphold justice, and inspire hope? The answer lies in sober, clear-headed leadership and a genuine commitment to unity that transcends politics.

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

# In Gaza, starvation looms and silence is complicity

By Uzma Ehtasham



Some numbers are too painful to comprehend. Fourteen thousand children. That is the projected death toll within 48 hours in Gaza if food aid does not reach those who need it most. It is not hyperbole. It is not propaganda. It is the brutal reality on the ground, where over two million people are now trapped in a man-made nightmare. Starvation, displacement, mass detentions, and the unrelenting specter of death — these are not consequences of war but evidence of what many around the world are now naming as genocide. The deliberate denial of aid, the blockade of food at the border, the bombardment of civilian homes — none of it can be dismissed or explained away as collateral damage.

At the Rafah border crossing, some 160,000 metric tons of food remain halted, just beyond reach of the starving. Meanwhile, inside Gaza, hospitals lie in ruins, schools have been turned to rubble, and whole neighborhoods have been wiped off the map. In Khan Younis, where families had sought refuge after fleeing from northern areas, new orders have arrived: evacuate again, even as bombs fall without pause. The Israeli military has made clear its intention to proceed with a full takeover of Gaza. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, unmoved by growing international outrage, has publicly reaffirmed his commitment to the siege, to the strikes, to the suffering. With more than 80 Palestinians killed in the past day alone, and countless more wounded, the offensive shows no signs of slowing.

In this dire context, the world’s response has been slow, fragmented, and often hollow. But in recent days, some meaningful shifts have begun to emerge — too late, perhaps, for many who have already perished, but crucial nonetheless for the millions still clinging to survival. The United Kingdom’s suspension of trade ties with Israel stands out as the most forceful rebuke issued yet. It signals that Britain, long accused of silence or complicity, is finally beginning to align its words with actions. Sanctions targeting extremist Jewish settlers and organizations mark a new willingness to hold perpetrators accountable. The European Union, for its part, has launched a review of trade and diplomatic agreements — a sign that even Israel’s most ardent partners are finding its actions harder to defend.

Pakistan, consistent in its vocal support for Palestinian rights, has labelled Israel’s planned takeover of Gaza a threat to regional security. The condemnation is clear. France, Canada, and several other nations have echoed this stance, hinting at broader sanctions. Yet despite these mounting pressures, Israel’s posture remains defiant. Netanyahu has declared that no amount of international condemnation will alter his

government’s course. And why should it? For decades, Israel’s security and impunity have been underwritten by its most powerful ally: the United States. As long as Washington continues to offer unconditional support — financially, diplomatically, militarily — little will change on the ground.

It is this alliance, more than any military superiority that enables Israel to act with such audacity. With American vetoes shielding it from United Nations resolutions and military aid flowing uninterrupted, Israel is not facing the kind of cost-benefit analysis that most nations are forced to consider. And yet, there is a growing sense — from the streets of London and Paris to the capitals of Muslim-majority states — that this moment may mark a turning point. That if the world chooses to act decisively now, Israel’s aggression can be checked. The weight of international pressure is not nothing. It matters. And the time to apply it is not tomorrow, but now.

The people of Gaza are not pawns in a geopolitical chessboard. They are mothers, fathers, daughters, sons — families who once dreamed of futures not defined by siege and sorrow. In the face of unbearable loss, they have shown resilience beyond comprehension. But resilience is not enough. Starving children cannot eat hope. Bombed hospitals cannot be rebuilt with willpower. What they need now is action — bold, coordinated, moral action from the international community. To be clear, no one is asking for blind allegiance or simplistic

narratives. The conflict between Israel and Palestine is complex, historically rooted, and deeply tragic for many on all sides. But complexity is no excuse for inaction. Genocide is not a matter of perspective. Starvation is not a military tactic. When aid convoys are halted, when journalists are killed, when entire neighborhoods are reduced to ash, we are not witnessing the fog of war — we are witnessing crimes against humanity.

The Muslim world, which often speaks with passion and conviction about Palestine, must now turn those sentiments into strategy. Rhetoric will not save lives. Unity, economic leverage, and diplomatic boldness might. The same applies to the broader international community. Silence is no longer neutral — it is an endorsement of brutality. Every hour of delay costs lives. Every excuse peddled in the name of ‘balance’ or ‘self-defence’ deepens the moral failure of our time. This is a test — not just for governments and institutions, but for all of us. Will we look away, or will we face the horror and demand better from those in power? The answer cannot wait for the next briefing or the next round of negotiations. The children of Gaza are already dying. And history, as always, will remember who stood by and who stood up.

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

# Nietzsche’s fire: Becoming more than survival

By Atiq Raja



In the long and often solemn procession of Western philosophy, few voices rise with the piercing urgency of Friedrich Nietzsche’s. His words do not comfort, they ignite. He did not come to console the weary soul, but to shake it from its slumber. Nietzsche stands as one of those rare minds who dares not only to critique the world as it is, but to demand that we reimagine ourselves within it. His philosophy is not a doctrine to be memorized, but a call to live fiercely—with the mind unshackled and the spirit unafraid. At the core of Nietzsche’s thought is not despair, though many have mistakenly read it so. Rather, his work is a defiant affirmation of life, a rejection of passivity, and a bold reimagining of human potential. The concept of the Will to Power, so central to his philosophy, is frequently reduced to a caricature—misinterpreted as a lust for control or domination.

But in Nietzsche’s own writing, it pulses with something far more intimate and human. The Will to Power is the deep, instinctive drive within us to rise, to grow, to overcome—to take the raw clay of existence and shape it into something uniquely our own. It is a force that whispers to us not to obey, but to create. To look not to priests,

politicians or the platitudes of our peers for direction, but to dig deep into our own soul for purpose. Nietzsche’s true rebellion was never against religion per se, but against anything that dulls the human edge—anything that robs us of our will to become. Nowhere is this more visible than in his formulation of the Übermensch—the figure who dares to go beyond man, beyond the safe narratives and received wisdom of the crowd. It is easy, and perhaps tempting, to read this idea as elitist or cold. But Nietzsche was not sketching a blueprint for a superior class.

Nietzsche was imagining a person of courage—someone who no longer apologizes for existing, who ceases to conform merely to survive, and instead begins the lifelong project of self-creation. The Übermensch does not wait for permission. They do not defer to ancient codes or sacred texts for legitimacy. They write their own story. They invent new values not because the old ones were inconvenient, but because they were dead. And this, for Nietzsche, is not arrogance but necessity. A society that endlessly recycles the same moral assumptions that prizes comfort over courage and obedience over originality, risks suffocating the very qualities that make life worth living.

Of course, Nietzsche’s view of life was not one of naive optimism. He was intimately familiar with suffering—psychologically, physically, existentially. But rather than flee from pain, he urged us to confront it, to accept it, even to love it. His phrase Amor Fati—love of fate—asks us to say yes to all of it. Not only the sunlit hours of joy, but the long nights of confusion, heartbreak, and loss. Everything belongs. There is no “bad” chapter in the story of becoming. In this way, Nietzsche’s thought runs directly counter to the dominant tone of modern life, where ease is often mistaken for happiness and discomfort for failure. In such a world, we are conditioned to seek safety, to avoid risk, to curate our lives into pleasant illusions. But Nietzsche knew better. He knew that real power is forged in fire—that growth begins the moment we stop asking life to be fair, and begin asking ourselves to be strong.

His infamous pronouncement that “God is dead” was not, as it is often taken, a gleeful endorsement of secularism. It was an alarm bell. The collapse of traditional belief systems, he warned, would leave a vacuum—a void where meaning once resided. Without a divine script to follow, humanity would have to write its own. The danger was nihilism, the despair that nothing matters. The opportunity was transformation: to become not obedient worshippers of inherited truth, but creators of values that reflect the depth and complexity of the modern human condition. In this freedom, Nietzsche saw a kind of nobility. A terrifying nobility, yes, because it demands everything of us. It means there are no excuses, no fallback myths, no promised rewards for obedience. Only the

blank canvas of life, and the trembling brush in your own hand. And so we return to the fire at the center of his vision. Nietzsche does not offer comfort. He does not promise that it will be easy. He does not give us peace.

What he gives is infinitely more radical: the possibility of becoming. In a world that often asks only that we survive, Nietzsche asks us to thrive. To embrace the wild, terrifying freedom of a life not dictated but discovered. A life of integrity, intensity, and inward revolution. “What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal,” he wrote in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. We are not endpoints. We are not finished. We are the crossing. And to walk this bridge, to risk it all in the name of becoming, is perhaps the most human thing we can do. In an age that often rewards caution, Nietzsche still dares us to be bold. In a time of ready-made identities, he reminds us that selfhood is a task, not a given. And in a world that frequently settles for less, he challenges us to become more. This is not the comfort of religion, nor the smugness of reason. It is something harder, deeper, and far more beautiful. It is the cry of a man who looked into the abyss and came back not with answers, but with fire.

***The writer is a rights activist and CEO of AR Trainings and Consultancy, with degrees in Political Science and English Literature, can be reached at news@metro-morning.com***

# Message of national resolve

By Asghar Ali Mubarak



In a ceremony of immense symbolism and national pride, Pakistan conferred its highest military distinction—the Baton of Field Marshal—on Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir. The event, held at the Presidential Palace, was more than just a formality; it was a moment carefully choreographed to signal unity, strength, and unwavering commitment to sovereignty at a time of heightened regional volatility. It brought together not just state officials but a sense of national purpose, as leaders across political divides stood behind the man now enshrined in the highest rank the military can bestow. President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif awarded the baton in the presence of senior civilian and military leadership, foreign dignitaries, and a nation watching closely.

It was not simply the elevation of a general; it was a declaration of Pakistan’s intent to remain steadfast in the face of persistent threats. That the title of Field Marshal—used sparingly and reserved for extraordinary service—was given to General Munir speaks volumes about the trust placed in his leadership, especially following the critical moments of Operation Bunyan Marsos and the continuing Marka-e-Haq. President

Zardari captured the mood succinctly. “Pakistan desires peace, but this wish must never be mistaken for weakness,” he said. These words were not chosen lightly. They underscore the broader context of the honor—a response to a regional security environment growing ever more complex and hostile.

With terror attacks orchestrated from across the border, particularly the recent India-sponsored assault in Khuzdar that took the lives of innocent children, the government and military establishment appear united in their resolve to counter what they have labelled as a campaign of covert destabilization. Prime Minister Sharif went further in his remarks, crediting Field Marshal Munir for crushing the enemy’s arrogance and for safeguarding national security during periods of escalating regional hostilities. His words—“a new chapter in military excellence”—were as much a tribute as a warning: Pakistan will not tolerate encroachments, be they military, ideological, or digital. The reference to Operation Bunyan Marsos was pointed; a campaign that has become synonymous with strategic clarity and operational effectiveness, often cited as a textbook example of modern warfare adapted to asymmetric threats.

The ceremony came in the wake of the 270th Corps Commanders’ Conference—a crucial gathering of the Army’s senior-most leadership. Their condemnation of the Khuzdar attack was unequivocal. In their assessment, India’s shift from conventional failure, most recently exemplified by the fallout from the Pahalgam incident, to supporting terror proxies in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, reflects a broader agenda: to sow discord and erode Pakistan’s internal stability. But the forum did not limit its focus to the battlefield alone. It addressed the hybrid nature of modern conflict, where misinformation, propaganda, and digital manipulation now operate alongside physical violence. In this domain, the military acknowledged the importance of the Pakistani media, civil society, and especially its youth. By reinforcing the national narrative and resisting disinformation, these groups serve as a first line of defence in an increasingly blurred theatre of war.

The message from the commanders was clear: no threat—whether by bullet or bandwidth—will succeed in shaking Pakistan’s foundation. The blood of martyrs from the ongoing Marka-e-Haq was honored, and their sacrifices pledged to a cause far greater than any political or tactical victory. Sovereignty, they reminded us, is not a negotiation; it is a duty, shared between those in uniform and those in everyday civilian life. What emerged from the day’s events was a narrative of national resilience. As Field Marshal Munir stood flanked by the country’s top leadership, his elevation symbolized more than personal achievement. It embodied an era where military professionalism, strategic restraint, and civil-military

harmony define Pakistan’s posture on the world stage. It was a message not just to friends and foes abroad but also to citizens at home: that the country will stand firm, guided by principle and prepared by design.

For many, the ceremony may have evoked memories of past military leaders and their legacies—some inspiring, others controversial. Yet there is a new tone emerging under Field Marshal Munir, one that leans heavily on operational discipline, internal accountability, and regional clarity. It is a vision that seeks not only to defend Pakistan’s borders but to shape the nation’s identity in an age of hybrid confrontation. At a time when regional adversaries seek to exploit vulnerabilities through acts of terror and cyber distortion, Pakistan’s response has been one of moral clarity and institutional readiness. The conferment of the Field Marshal title thus served not only as an accolade but also as an affirmation: Pakistan’s sovereignty is not up for compromise. It cannot be shaken by coercion, nor broken by betrayal. In the figure of Field Marshal Munir, the state has invested its confidence—and with that comes the expectation of vigilance, justice, and continued restraint. These are qualities not of conquest but of character. And in an age that increasingly rewards the reckless that alone is worth honoring.

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

# Modern-day slavery

By Masood Lohar

Behind the manicured lawns of Pakistan’s elite housing societies and the gleam of luxury sedans lies a brutal, often invisible truth: modern-day slavery.

Domestic workers, security guards, drivers and daily wage labourers live and work under harsh conditions, deprived of legal rights, fair wages and basic human dignity. This systemic exploitation is not an aberration but a feature of a political economy that rewards wealth, impunity, and inherited privilege.

In Islamabad’s F-sectors, Karachi’s Clifton and DHA, and Lahore’s Cantt and Gulberg, elite families live in comfort, often guarded and served by individuals earning below-minimum wages. While provincial laws set minimum wages at around Rs32,000 per month (2023–24), many domestic workers are paid as little as Rs10,000–15,000. Most are hired without formal contracts, denied social security, and subjected to arbitrary work hours that routinely stretch to 12–16 hours a day.

These violations are rarely reported. When they are, it is often because the violence has crossed an unignorable threshold. Tayyaba (Islamabad, 2016–17): A 10-year-old maid employed by a sitting judge

was found beaten, starved and locked in a storeroom. The case only gained traction after her injuries went viral on social media. Legal justice, however, remained elusive due to out-of-court settlements and systemic inertia.

Uzma Bibi (Islamabad, 2019): Tortured to death at the age of 16 over a theft accusation. Her employers initially claimed illness. The legal battle that followed revealed just how difficult it is for the poor to pursue justice against the powerful.

Fatima Phuriro (Ranipur, Sindh, 2023): A 10-year-old girl employed at a local Pir’s haveli died after extreme torture. Leaked CCTV footage showed her in agony days before her death. The incident highlighted a broader culture of feudal impunity and child domestic labour.

Karachi maid abuse (2021): An underage maid was reportedly confined to a bathroom for several days by her employers. Though shocking, such incidents are not rare. Most never come to light.

Victims’ families are often pressured into silence. Police may refuse to register FIRs, or push for ‘compromises’. Even when

provincial laws or the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act of 1992 apply, enforcement is lax and legal processes slow.

After long shifts, workers return to the shadows: squatter settlements like Orangi and Machar Colony in Karachi, or France Colony in Islamabad. These unregulated areas, home to the labouring poor, lack access to clean water, sanitation, reliable electricity or healthcare.

Forced evictions are common. Under the guise of “development” or “beautification,” state authorities frequently demolish these settlements to make way for malls or gated communities.

No compensation. No alternative housing. The state protects the interests of developers, not dwellers.

Pakistan’s elite wealth is not purely earned; it is often the product of systemic extraction. Black money, tax evasion, land grabbing and speculative real estate schemes form the bedrock of this wealth. Expansive housing projects rise on contested land. Labourers, many of them minors, construct these luxury towers under exploitative conditions. Guards and cleaners

work in the same buildings they could never afford to live in.

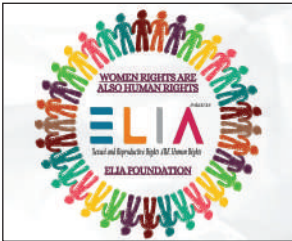
‘Charity’ during Ramadan or token acts of religious giving are often brandished as a moral shield by the elite. But wage theft, physical abuse and class apartheid persist year-round.

Pakistan is increasingly divided — not just economically but socially and morally. One half enjoys uninterrupted power, imported groceries, and foreign holidays. The other half, trapped in precarity, sells their time, strength and sometimes their children into servitude.

Domestic workers are often patronisingly told they are ‘part of the family’, even as they are denied basic privacy, proper meals or days off. Many are forbidden from using the same crockery or sitting at the same table as their employers.

No country can claim moral or developmental progress while systematically dehumanising its workers. Pakistan needs urgent, systemic reform — not more platitudes. These include: one, enforceable legal protections: mandatory contracts, minimum wage enforcement, regulated work hours, and paid leave for all domestic workers. The Punjab Domestic Workers Act (2019) should be expanded and effectively implemented nationwide.





## Iran warns US over Israeli strike on nuclear sites

**Tehran warns that any Israeli military action will implicate the US, holding the Biden administration fully accountable for escalating regional conflict**

6News Desk

TEHRAN: Iran has issued a stark warning to the United States, making it clear that any Israeli military action against its nuclear facilities would not be viewed as an isolated act but one that implicates Washington directly. The statement, made through a formal letter to the United Nations, comes amid a renewed wave of speculation in American media about a possible Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, in the strongly worded letter, left little room for ambiguity. "We believe that if Israel acts, the US will be complicit, and must bear full legal responsibility," he wrote, signalling Tehran's intention to hold the Biden administration accountable should tensions escalate into armed conflict. The message, while di-



rected at the UN, was unmistakably aimed at Washington and Tel Aviv alike, at a time when geopolitical nerves in the region are already stretched thin.

The letter follows a troubling pattern of rising rhetoric and shadow diplomacy. While Tehran continues to assert that its nuclear program is strictly for peaceful purposes, Israel has long maintained that Iran is moving closer to developing a nuclear weapon—something it has vowed to prevent at

any cost.

Israeli leaders have often hinted at preemptive military action, with or without broader international support. Now, Iran appears to be drawing its own red lines. This move by Iran is being read in diplomatic circles not merely as a protest, but as a preemptive warning—one that seeks to blur the lines of distinction between an Israeli trigger and American backing.

In Tehran's view, Israeli warplanes do not fly without

the nod, tacit or overt, from Washington. It is a perception rooted in history, and now revived with urgency. The tension is not just rhetorical. For ordinary Iranians, the fear of conflict is never too far from the surface. Years of sanctions, isolation, and nuclear brinkmanship have fostered a deep fatigue among civilians who feel caught in the middle of power games they do not control.

For them, the idea of another military confrontation—especially one involving nuclear sites—is a terrifying prospect. And yet, in political corridors, the conversation continues in the language of threats and deterrence. Observers say the timing of Iran's letter is significant. With American elections looming and Israel facing its own domestic upheavals, the regional power dynamics are shifting.

## CIA shuts front gate following security scare in Virginia

News Desk

VIRGINIA: The Central Intelligence Agency has closed the main entrance to its headquarters in Langley, Virginia, following a security incident early this morning that led to a guard opening fire on a suspicious individual. The agency announced the closure through an official statement, confirming that the front gate will remain shut until further notice as investigators work to determine the circumstances of the confrontation.

According to a CIA spokesperson, the suspect was apprehended outside the perimeter of the building and taken into custody without any reported injuries to agency personnel. A full investigation is now underway, with the agency coordinating closely with law enforcement to assess whether the individual posed a real threat or was acting erratically in a high-security zone.

Details remain limited, but US media outlets have reported that the shooting took place shortly after dawn, when the individual approached the heavily secured compound. One of the guards on duty reportedly fired after the person failed to comply with security protocols. Officials have not disclosed whether the suspect was armed or what prompted the guard to use force.

While the CIA has not released the identity of the suspect, or their motive, the agency's swift response and immediate lockdown procedures suggest the seriousness with which such threats are handled at one of the most protected facilities in the country.

Visitors and staff have been advised to use alternate entrances and expect delays while security officials comb through surveillance footage and gather witness accounts. The headquarters, often the center of intense scrutiny and secrecy, is once again in the spotlight—this time not for covert operations, but for a rare breach of its outer defences.

## PTA chief apologizes after Senate committee clash

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Hafeez Ur Rehman, has expressed regret over an incident that occurred during a Senate Functional Committee meeting, stating that his remarks were not intended to be offensive.

In a statement issued to clarify the matter, Hafeez said there was no intention to use any un-parliamentary language during the exchange.

"It was a light-hearted comment shared in a casual tone with the honorable senator," he said. He added that if his words caused any offence, he had already extended his apology during the committee session.

"We hold Senator Aimal Wali and his family in high regard," the PTA chairman noted.

The incident in question took place during a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Less Developed Areas, where Hafeez Ur Rehman reportedly accused Senator Aimal Wali of using hashish. The exchange quickly turned bitter, with sharp words traded between the two.

## Pakistan signals readiness for water talks with India

**The Indus Waters Treaty stands not as mere ink on parchment but as a binding framework demanding respect, dialogue, and sincere commitment from both Pakistan and India**

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad has sent a clear message to New Delhi that the decades-old Indus Waters Treaty is not up for renegotiation or suspension, with Pakistan's Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan asserting that the country remains open to dialogue but will not tolerate unilateral action.

Speaking to a British news agency, Mansoor Awan made it clear that Pakistan considers the treaty "fully functional and effective," insisting that India, as a signatory, is bound by its legal obligations and cannot walk away from the agreement on a whim. His remarks come amid increasing concerns in Islamabad over India's recent statements suggesting a possible review or suspension of the treaty.

While he maintained a tone of cautious diplomacy, his message was rooted in legal clarity and national interest. "The Indus Waters Treaty is not just a piece of paper—it is a legal and operational framework that



must be respected," he said, adding that Pakistan is ready to engage constructively if India has any legitimate concerns.

Signed in 1960 under the auspices of the World Bank, the Indus Waters Treaty has long served as a rare example of cooperation between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. It governs the use of waters from the Indus River system, dividing control of six rivers between India and Pakistan.

Despite periods of deep political tension and even conflict, the treaty has remained in place, often hailed as a symbol of resilience in a fractured relationship. But in a move that signals just how seriously Pakistan

views the issue, the National Assembly on Thursday passed a unanimous resolution warning India against any attempt to unilaterally alter or suspend the agreement.

Tabled by Federal Minister for Water Resources Mian Mohsin Wattoo, the resolution described any such move by India as an outright act of aggression. "This House considers any Indian suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty a declaration of war," the resolution stated bluntly. It further called on the government to prepare countermeasures, both diplomatic and strategic, to ensure Pakistan's water rights are not undermined.

## CM Maryam draws parallels between May 9, India's terrorism

By Faizan Khan

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has drawn a sharp and controversial parallel between the violent incidents of May 9 and the actions taken by India, arguing that there is little to distinguish between the two. Speaking at a gathering of students in Sargodha, she urged the younger generation to guard their minds as carefully as they protect their laptops from viruses, warning against the spread of what she called a "political virus"—a metaphor for divisive and destructive ideas that could harm the nation's unity.

In her address, Maryam Nawaz acknowledged the reality of political disagreements and the diversity of



opinions regarding public figures. However, she made it clear that the burning of military installations on May 9 crossed a line she deemed unacceptable. According to the chief minister, these attacks targeted strategic military bases that India's adversaries had repeatedly failed to damage over many decades. She described the perpetrators' actions as tantamount to terrorism, highlighting the gravity of attacking key defence infrastructure. Maryam Nawaz went further to underline the resilience of Pakistan's armed forces by recalling that the very air force installations set ablaze during those incidents later played a critical role in shooting down five enemy aircraft.

Her message to the youth was clear and firm. She implored them never to allow themselves to become instruments of division or to speak against their homeland in any form. Using evocative language, she called on young Pakistanis to stand as an "iron wall"—a steadfast and unyielding force protecting their country from harm.

## Lahore end Karachi's run with commanding victory

By our correspondent

LAHORE: In a charged eliminator clash at the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 10, Lahore Qalandars kept their title hopes alive with a confident six-wicket victory over Karachi Kings, chasing down a challenging target of 191 runs with poise and precision.

Karachi Kings, batting first, put up 190 for eight in their allotted 20 overs. Much of the resistance came from skipper David Warner, who anchored the innings with a measured knock of 75 off 52 deliveries. His innings, peppered with eight boundaries and three sixes, gave the Kings a solid foundation, but the momentum never quite turned into dominance.

Warner's stay at the crease ended when he was caught by Zaman Khan off the bowling of Mohammed Naeem—a breakthrough that swung the tide towards Lahore. Khushdil Shah contributed a valuable unbeaten 27, playing the role of a fin-



isher with composure, but contributions from the rest of the batting lineup were modest at best. Tim Seifert briefly threatened with a rapid 16, before failing to Asif Ali.

James Vince managed only four runs, while Saad Beg and Irfan Khan chipped in with 11 and 18 respectively. Mohammad Nabi added 16, and the lower order—Abbass Afridi, Hassan Ali and Mir Hamza—failed to leave a lasting impact. Lahore Qalandars' bowlers rose to the occasion, led by a fiery Haris Rauf who bagged three wickets. Captain Shaheen Shah Afridi continued to set the tone with

the ball, grabbing two scalps. The supporting cast—Zaman Khan, Shakib Al Hasan and Mohammed Naeem—each claimed a wicket, keeping Karachi's scoring in check during the critical middle overs. When it was Lahore's turn to bat, their chase unfolded with discipline and sharp intent. Despite Karachi's early breakthroughs, the Qalandars' top and middle order held their nerve.

The opening pair set the stage, while the likes of Fakhar Zaman and Abdullah Shafiq provided the momentum needed to keep the required run rate within reach.

## Kamal backs Palestine at World Health Assembly

Press Release

GENEVA: At the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA) convened by the World Health Organization (WHO), Mustafa Kamal, senior central leader of MQM Pakistan and Federal Health Minister, engaged in a significant meeting with Palestinian Health Minister Dr. Majid Abu Ramzan. During this high-level discussion, Mustafa Kamal conveyed a special message from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, reaffirming Pakistan's steadfast and unwavering support for the Palestinian cause.

In a display of solidarity, Mustafa Kamal underscored that the entire Pakistani nation stands firmly with the resilient Palestinian people amid ongoing adversity. The two ministers engaged in detailed talks concerning the provision of medical and humanitarian aid to Gaza, a re-



gion battered by relentless conflict. Dr. Mai Al-Kaila, another key Palestinian health official, expressed profound gratitude for Pakistan's historic and sustained backing, highlighting the long-standing ties between the two nations.

Addressing the global assembly, Mustafa Kamal turned the spotlight onto the grave situation unfolding in Gaza. He condemned the Israeli military's aggressive actions with unequivocal severity, particularly denouncing the deliberate targeting of

hospitals and medical personnel—a breach of international humanitarian norms that he described as profoundly tragic and utterly unacceptable.

His speech painted a stark picture of the humanitarian crisis, urging the international community to recognize the severity of what he characterized as a genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people.

Mustafa Kamal's appeal was urgent and resolute: the ongoing atrocities must cease immediately.

## Deadly Israeli strikes on Gaza kill more than 50 in a day

News Desk

GAZA: At least 52 Palestinians have lost their lives in fresh Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry, as violence in the region shows no sign of abating. Over the past 24 hours alone, Israeli military operations have claimed a total of 105 Palestinian lives and left 247 others injured, deepening the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Rescue teams working amid the rubble of de-



stroyed buildings recovered three bodies, a stark reminder of the destruction that continues to engulf civilian areas. Since the

ceasefire broke down in March, Israeli strikes have resulted in the deaths of 3,613 Palestinians in Gaza, with thousands more

wounded. The relentless bombardment has pushed the death toll from Israeli military actions since 7 October 2023 to a staggering 53,762, while injuries have surpassed 122,000.

The scale of the tragedy is particularly heart-wrenching when considering the number of children affected. The Health Ministry reported that 343 children have been among those killed, highlighting the devastating toll on the most vulnerable members of the population. These figures

underscore the profound human cost of the ongoing conflict, which has shattered countless families and communities.

As the region endures continuous military operations, the grim statistics serve as a powerful testimony to the urgent need for renewed diplomatic efforts and humanitarian intervention. The cycle of violence shows no clear end, leaving the people of Gaza trapped in a devastating conflict with deep and lasting consequences.

## MU student commits suicide in Rohri

By Imtiaz Hussain

SUKKUR: A 24-year-old female student of Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Khairpur campus, has died by suicide in a tragic incident that has reignited concern over the intense societal and familial pressures faced by young women in Pakistan.

The deceased, Khushboo Rind, was found hanging from a ceiling fan in her home at New Yard Colony in Rohri, Sukkur. According to initial police reports, the young woman had been deeply distressed over her family's refusal to accept her decision to marry a person of her choice.

Local police responded quickly after being alerted to the scene, and the body was shifted to a nearby hospital for medico-legal examination. Preliminary findings suggest suicide, with investigators pointing to ongoing domestic tensions over marriage as a likely trigger.

Following postmortem and procedural formalities, the body was returned to the family. A case has been registered, and investigations remain ongoing, though no criminal charges have yet been filed. Khushboo's death has stirred conversations across Sindh about the burden of conservative social norms on young women, especially when personal autonomy clashes with traditional family expectations.

## Kh Asif accuses India of backing terrorism

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has sharply condemned the recent Khuzdar attack, labelling it a "horrific example of terrorism" and holding India directly responsible for instigating violence in Pakistan through its proxy networks. Asif accused Indian authorities of harboring and facilitating anti-Pakistan militants, claiming that some of their leadership is either based in or receiving treatment in New Delhi.

Referring to long-standing allegations of Indian involvement in terrorism on Pakistani soil, Asif pointed to the arrest of Indian national Kulbhushan Jadhav in Balochistan as a clear example. Jadhav, a former Indian Navy officer, was captured in 2016 and convicted by a military court in Pakistan for espionage and sabotage activities. His case remains a central piece of Pakistan's diplomatic assertions that India is orchestrating a covert war through intelligence operatives and insurgent proxies.

Asif accused Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi of deliberately fueling hostilities on Pakistan's western front, vowing that



such actions will be met with "full force." He warned that India, embarrassed by past failures, is seeking to entangle Pakistan in perpetual conflict by sustaining low-intensity but continuous provocations. "We must remain vigilant," he urged, "as these threats are designed to wear down our national focus and resilience."

Drawing a line from communal violence in Gujarat to current geopolitical tensions, Asif made an emotionally charged reference to the 2002 Gujarat riots under Modi's leadership, where hundreds of Muslims were killed. He described Modi as someone who once "burned people alive" and is now "exporting terrorism across the region," implying that the current wave of attacks is an extension of a violent ideology rooted in sectarian hatred.