

May 10 loss etched forever in India’s memory: PM Shehbaz

On 10 May, our soldiers carved history with unmatched courage and strategy, a day etched in unity the enemy can never erase

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a charged address to a public gathering on Murree Road, declared 10 May as a day India would never forget, hailing it as a defining symbol of Pakistan’s military prowess and national unity. Speaking at the inauguration of the Jinnah Square Interchange, the prime minister described the day as one etched in history — a moment, he said, when the armed forces, backed by the resolve of the Pakistani people, delivered a blow so decisive that it would “be remembered until the end of time.”

With visible conviction and emotion, Shehbaz Sharif praised what he called a “crushing defeat” inflicted on India, framing the date as more than a military success. “It was a special



gift and blessing from God,” he told the crowd, reinforcing the significance of the occasion as not merely strategic, but spiritual and patriotic.

The prime minister congratulated the nation, celebrating the soldiers who, in his words, turned the tide through sheer courage and precise strategy. “Our soldiers, through courage and flawless strategy, made history on 10 May. This day is a testament to our unity — one the enemy will never be

able to erase,” he said, adding that the entire country had stood shoulder to shoulder with its defenders.

The remarks came in a climate of heightened rhetoric, underscoring the government’s broader effort to reaffirm national pride and military strength. For Shehbaz Sharif, the moment was not just about recalling a battle, but about invoking a powerful narrative of unity — one he believes resonates deeply with a public that continues to see the armed

forces as both protectors and symbols of resilience.

Shehbaz Sharif lauded the efforts of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the construction firm, and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, noting that the project was completed under a tight schedule without compromising quality. He urged the CDA and Islamabad’s city administration to continue working with greater efficiency and commitment to make the capital even more beautiful and accessible.

It is the first time in Pakistan’s history, officials noted, that such a large-scale underpass has been completed in such a short time. Under Naqvi’s directives, landscaping and horticultural enhancements are ongoing. The project is expected to ease travel for commuters heading to Murree, saving time and fuel for thousands.

Protestors halt First Lady’s convoy near Jamshoro, case registered

News Desk

JAMSHORO: Police have registered a case after the convoy of Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari — First Lady and Member of the National Assembly — was stopped by protestors near the Jamshoro Toll Plaza while en route from Karachi to Nawabshah.

According to SSP Jamshoro Zafar Siddiq, a number of individuals involved in the incident have been arrested for causing a public disturbance and threatening the peace. He said that while the situation was quickly brought under control, some protestors struck the vehicles in the convoy with their hands and sticks.

The convoy, which included a police escort, managed to escort Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari’s vehicle safely through the protest site within a minute, preventing any direct harm or delay. The protestors were demonstrating against the controversial canal project and corporate farming, both of which have sparked discontent among local communities who fear displacement and loss of livelihood.

Police say the situation was contained without any major escalation, and an investigation is underway to identify more individuals involved in the protest that briefly disrupted the high-profile journey.

Thousands protest in Kolkata against ‘Warmonger Modi’

A coalition of communist parties, human rights groups, and civil society organized the rally as a peaceful protest against rising militarization and divisive politics

News Desk

KOLKATA: Thousands gathered in Kolkata to voice their opposition to what they described as the Modi government’s aggressive war policies, creating a charged atmosphere in the city streets. The protestors, united by a shared desire for peace, raised powerful slogans condemning extremism and called urgently for the government to abandon confrontational politics. Instead, they urged the ruling party to resolve all outstanding disputes with neighboring Pakistan through diplomatic dialogue rather than hostility.

The rally, organized by a coalition of communist parties, human rights organizations, and civil society groups, was intended as a peaceful demonstration against growing militarization and the politics of division. However, what began as a determined call for peace quickly spiraled into chaos when activists associated with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) confronted the protestors. Eyewitnesses described scenes of violence, with BJP supporters pushing, beating, and targeting demonstrators, escalating tensions and leaving many shocked by the outbreak of aggression in what was meant to be a peaceful gathering.

Those participating in the protest strongly condemned the violent behavior, demanding that those responsible for the attacks be held accountable under the law. Their grievances went beyond the immediate violence, reflecting deeper frustrations with what they see as a political climate increasingly defined by intolerance and suppression of dissent.



The incident in Kolkata has highlighted the fraught political atmosphere in India, where peaceful protests are often met with hostility, and divisions are exacerbated by aggressive political rhetoric. For the organizers, the protest was a crucial reminder of the urgent need for dialogue and reconciliation at a time when many fear that the path towards conflict threatens to overshadow the pursuit of peace. As voices calling for calm and diplomacy continue to be challenged, the events in Kolkata stand as a stark illustration of the ongoing struggle over the country’s future direction.

Opposition lawmakers demand resolution of Karachi’s water woes

By Salman Shah

KARACHI: Calls for urgent water supply to Karachi dominated the Sindh Assembly for the second day in a row, as lawmakers from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and Jamaat-e-Islami intensified pressure on the provincial government to take immediate action.

The session was marked by pointed demands to curb illegal water connections and clamp down on profiteering, which many blame for worsening the city’s growing water crisis.

MQM-P representatives Sharaq Jamal and Aamir Siddiqui were vocal in their criticism, openly accusing the Sindh government of neglecting one of Karachi’s most pressing issues. Siddiqui, in particular, expressed frustration with the lack of response



from authorities.

“I have written letters to the local government minister about the water crisis,” he told the assembly, “but he doesn’t even bother to answer the phone.” His words highlighted the deep sense of frustration among lawmakers and citizens alike, as Karachi’s residents face increasingly unreliable water access.

The exchange underscored how the city’s water shortage has become not only a logistical challenge but also a political flashpoint.

Illegal water connections, which enable some to profit at the expense of many, remain a major concern, with calls growing louder for swift government intervention to address corruption and mismanagement.

Raising a call-attention notice, Jamaat-e-Islami MPA Muhammad Farooq pointed to the acute water shortage in his constituency, PS-91.

“There’s never a water shortage at the hydrants,” he said. “The tankers keep running, but our taps remain dry. The water mafia is thriving in Karachi.”

Later, addressing the chamber again, Farooq also raised the issue of ongoing power cuts in Karachi, noting that a scheduled committee meeting on load-shedding was cancelled because the CEO of K-Electric failed to show up — for the second time.

Rs161bn electricity dues may be slashed from NFC award

Officials maintained that the dues are drawn from distribution company records and are officially acknowledged at that operational level

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Power, chaired by Senator Mohsin Aziz, has deliberated on a significant proposal to recover Rs161 billion in electricity dues from provincial governments by deducting the amount from their National Finance Commission (NFC) shares. The proposal, already approved by the Council of Common Interests (CCI), is being operationalized by the Power Division in coordination with the Finance Ministry.

An additional secretary from the Power Division informed the committee that provinces have been given a deadline of 31 March to clear outstanding electricity bills. According to the data presented, Sindh owes Rs68 billion, Punjab Rs42 billion, Balochistan Rs41 billion, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rs10 billion. While Punjab has been cooperative and is close to settling its dues, other provinces have reportedly stalled the reconciliation process for over two years.

Senator Mohsin Aziz raised the issue of accountability, asking who would validate the dues in the absence of reconciliation by provincial governments. Officials responded that the dues are based on records from the distribution companies and are recognized at that level.



Energy Minister Owais Laghari confirmed that under the CCI’s directive, the federal government will deduct 25 percent of the reconciled amount directly from the provinces’ NFC share, while the rest will be recovered once full reconciliation is completed. He clarified that deductions will only apply to reconciled amounts, not disputed ones, and discussions are ongoing with the Finance Ministry to finalize the process.

The committee also reviewed the reported Rs7.41 per unit reduction in electricity tariffs. Power Division officials broke down the relief, attributing Rs2.37 to quarterly adjustments, Rs1.13 to fuel price reductions, Rs2.10 to cutbacks in petroleum levies, and Rs1.81 to other cost reductions.

Waseem Mukhtar, chairman of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), told the committee that the lower tariffs in recent

quarters are the result of structural changes, including the termination of expensive power contracts and renegotiations with independent power producers (IPPs). He described these savings as permanent improvements to the system. However, when Senator Aziz questioned the durability of monthly fuel price adjustments, NEPRA warned of volatility in hydropower due to climate factors.

Mukhtar pointed to significantly reduced snowfall and declining water levels in reservoirs this year, which caused lower hydropower output in April and led to a positive fuel adjustment of Rs1.23 per unit. The discussion underscored the complex challenges in balancing financial recovery from provinces, tariff relief for consumers, and structural reforms in Pakistan’s energy sector, all while coping with unpredictable environmental conditions.

‘Duffer zone’ jibe sparks fresh criticism of Modi

News Desk

NEW DELHI: Renowned Indian author and blogger Avay Shakyia has described Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ideological influence and the regions loyal to him as a “duffer zone,” in a sharply critical interview with journalist Karan Thapar.

Shakyia, known for his outspoken views, said the “duffer zone” is not just a geographic term but a reflection of a particular mindset — one marked by low levels of education and high population density. According to him, this zone spans northern and northeastern India, areas that form the core of the Hindu nationalist “hotline” and where both the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and India’s mainstream media dominate.

He added that the zone is defined by a hardened “Hindutva” ideology that is inherently intolerant.

It dismisses other religions and languages and routinely vilifies Muslims by associating them with terrorism — even when they are decorated army officers or respected academics.

Shakyia cited examples such as Colonel Sofia Qureshi and Professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad to illustrate how even high-achieving Muslims are not spared from prejudice.

CDWP approves Rs104bn in new development projects

These projects are set to significantly boost connectivity and stimulate economic growth across multiple regions of the country

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Under the leadership of Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) met recently to assess and approve significant development initiatives that aim to advance Pakistan’s infrastructure and industrial growth. According to a statement issued by the Planning Ministry, the CDWP gave the green light to development projects amounting to Rs104 billion during the session, marking a decisive step forward in the country’s ambitious development agenda.

In addition to these approvals, three major projects valued at Rs96 billion were forwarded to the National Economic Council (NEC) for further consideration and final approval. These projects are expected to play a crucial role in enhancing connectivity and economic activity in various regions of the country.

Among the projects approved by the CDWP were four initiatives worth Rs8 billion, alongside two schemes specifically targeting the industrial and commercial sectors. Of particular note was the approval of Phase 2 of the 1000 Sewing Units project, allocated Rs1.95 billion,



designed to boost small-scale manufacturing and provide employment opportunities. Another important allocation was Rs1.25 billion for land acquisition dedicated to establishing SME Facilitation Centres, reflecting the government’s ongoing commitment to supporting small and medium enterprises.

The government also demonstrated its focus on advancing Pakistan’s space ambitions by approving funding for the country’s first lunar rover project, which received Rs2.53 billion, and the human space mission project, allocated Rs2.24 billion. These projects signify a forward-looking vision that aims to position Pakistan among the emerging players in space exploration and technology.

Infrastructure development remains a priority, as evidenced by the projects sent to the NEC. These in-

clude the Sanghar to Rohri road project, estimated to cost Rs36.91 billion, and the Rohri to Guddu Barrage road, both intended to improve regional connectivity and facilitate trade. The ambitious Mehran Highway project, aiming to expand the Nawabshah to Rajanpur stretch into a dual carriageway, was also forwarded to the NEC with an estimated cost of Rs41 billion, underscoring the government’s focus on upgrading vital transport routes.

During the meeting, Minister Ahsan Iqbal stressed the importance of ensuring that project costs reflect current market rates to avoid unrealistic budgeting and ensure financial discipline. His remarks highlight the balancing act between pushing forward development goals and maintaining fiscal prudence in a challenging economic environment.

Fifth round of Iran-US talks in Rome ends without breakthrough

News Desk

ROME: The fifth round of indirect talks between Iran and the United States, held in Rome under the mediation of Oman, ended without any definitive progress, according to an announcement from the Omani Foreign Ministry. Despite the lack of immediate breakthroughs, the ministry expressed cautious optimism that the coming days could bring solutions leading to a sustainable agreement, reflecting the delicate and ongoing nature of these negotiations.

The discussions saw Iran represented by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, while the US delegation was led by Middle East special



envoy Steve Witkoff. These indirect talks, mediated by Oman, continue to focus on resolving long-standing tensions surrounding Iran’s nuclear program and broader regional issues, but the path to consensus remains fraught with challenges.

Adding to the uncertainty, Iran’s Supreme

Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has voiced his skepticism about the talks’ potential outcomes. He criticized the persistent denial of Iran’s right to enrich uranium, calling it a fundamental error, and warned the United States against making what he described as “foolish statements.”

Bilawal seeks guidance from PM to counter Indian propaganda

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari recently called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss strategies aimed at confronting India’s aggressive posture and provocative agenda on the international stage.

The meeting, which brought together senior PPP figures including Senator Sherry Rehman and former federal minister Hina Rabbani Khar, focused on the escalating tensions between Pakistan and India and the



diplomatic efforts needed to shape global perceptions. During the discussion, the leaders reviewed recent government delegation visits abroad, designed to counter what they described as Indian propaganda while promoting Pakistan’s narrative to key international audiences.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari sought guidance from the Prime Minister on how best to articulate Pakistan’s stance in influential world capitals, emphasizing the importance of a unified and strategic diplomatic front. Expressing appreciation for the confidence placed in the PPP’s role in

these diplomatic initiatives, Bilawal underscored the party’s commitment to actively championing Pakistan’s interests abroad. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in turn, voiced optimism that under Bilawal’s leadership, the delegation would present Pakistan’s position with strength and clarity, helping to navigate the complex geopolitical environment. This gathering reflects the government’s resolve to coordinate a robust response to India’s actions and reinforce Pakistan’s diplomatic engagement on the global stage amid ongoing regional tensions.

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When violence becomes theatre

In the India of today, the screen has become a mirror — not of truth, but of a dark and orchestrated performance, where national tragedy and state propaganda coalesce. What once masqueraded as escapist cinema now carries the unmistakable stench of strategic farce. The killing of innocent tourists in Pahalgam, a region painted as secure and stable, should have shaken the conscience of the entire India. But in Narendra Modi’s government, it has instead only exposed the terrifying ease with which fiction is manipulated to veil uncomfortable truths. The incident — brutal, horrifying, and tragically human — unfolded not in the pages of a script, but in the rugged beauty of Kashmir, a place that has long borne the scars of occupation and suspicion.

The very idea that armed assailants could move freely and kill civilians in an area heavily blanketed by Indian occupied forces defies logic. Pahalgam is no wilderness of lawlessness; it is a fortress of fences and fatigue, a terrain policed so intensely that ordinary Kashmiris are forced to prove their identity at every turn. How then, one must ask, did terror slip through the iron gates without resistance? This is not a question driven by cynicism. It is rooted in the basic expectations of accountability and responsibility in a democracy. But India no longer trades in transparency. Instead, the narrative is stage-managed — often borrowed, sometimes stolen — from the shadowy tactics of foreign intelligence scripts. The absurdity is not just that the Indian state failed to prevent the Pahalgam attack.

The real farce lies in the eerie silence that followed. No resignations, no high-level dismissals, no credible investigations — only more slogans, more scapegoats, more jingoistic noise. To question the efficiency of Indian intelligence or the role of its military in the valley is to invite accusations of disloyalty. Yet the public must be permitted to ask: where was the Rapid Response Force? Why did locals arrive before soldiers? Why are there always cameras ready when a terrorist is gunned down, but none when tourists bleed to death? What we’re witnessing isn’t simply state negligence. It is, increasingly, a chilling pattern of deliberate inaction cloaked in patriotic defiance. The parallels with other historical manipulations are difficult to ignore. Conspiracy theories are often the refuge of the desperate, but history has shown that governments are not above exploiting chaos.

The world still remembers how certain intelligence services across the globe used planted threats and choreographed violence to justify oppressive policies or foreign invasions. From the absence of Jewish employees on the day of the 9/11 attacks to the suspicion around the Israeli embassy bombing in London in 1996 — events later linked to Mosad’s machinations — the line between terrorism and statecraft has long been blurred. In Modi’s India, that line is not blurred — it is erased. What is perhaps most disturbing is the way this machinery extends into Indian popular culture. Bollywood, once a chaotic mosaic of romance and song, now dutifully serves as the cultural arm of the regime. Films are no longer created — they are commissioned. A storyline appears, conveniently echoing the latest national tragedy, and in steps a star draped in the flag.

Akshay Kumar or another equally stooge plays the soldier-savior, defeating caricatured terrorists, often with Pakistani accents, before the credits roll to an anthem. And just like that, the state’s failure is re-branded as strength. This is not cinema. This is narrative laundering. In the aftermath, Modi steps onto the stage — not to unite a grieving nation but to escalate the rhetoric. His declaration that India would choke Pakistan of water is not just reckless bravado; it is a glimpse into the authoritarian fantasies that now dominate Indian policymaking. Threats to violate international water treaties are not signs of strength. They are signs of a leadership that confuses vengeance with vision. And even more damning is that these declarations often ring hollow. Indian academics and hydrology experts have questioned the feasibility of such measures.

The silence that follows these questions is not ignorance — it is strategy. Keep the people angry, keep them distracted, and never let facts interfere with fury. India today stands at a crossroads. It can choose the path of justice, transparency, and genuine national security — or it can continue down this dark road of performance and pretence, where human lives are merely props in a carefully directed spectacle. The blood in Pahalgam is real. The grief is real. But until India confronts the disturbing ease with which its tragedies are turned into cinematic propaganda, the healing cannot begin. And for every moment it delays, the cost is borne not by the leaders who write the script, but by the innocent who fall between the lines. Pakistan Army rightfully identified the issue and asked India to investigate through international investigators to find out the truth.

Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, the Director General of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), rightly called this bluff in a recent interview with international media. “Only a madman could believe that India can stop Pakistan’s water,” he stated plainly. Blocking water for 240 million people is neither practical nor legally tenable under international treaties.

He reinforced that Pakistan’s battle is against deceit and aggression, and that the ultimate victory lies with truth and resilience — values that cannot be scripted or staged. Following the Pahalgam attack, India produced yet another fiction, another blame game, another baseless narrative. Pakistan’s response was calm, clear, and responsible: present evidence to a credible third party.

But India has none. Even its own foreign ministry admits investigations are ongoing. In the meantime, Indian media and state officials continue to wage a war of words, distorting facts in a self-made echo chamber. India boasts one of the world’s most advanced film and media industries. But when that apparatus is co-opted to produce war propaganda instead of cinema, the world must worry. It’s not just about Kashmir. It’s about a disturbing new normal where blood is spilled to feed the camera lens, and dissent is crushed beneath the weight of manufactured consent. In this theatre of deception, the victims are not just the dead, but the truth itself.

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

By Uzma Ehtasham



In a world where global power has grown diffused and increasingly complicated, clinging to the covert scripts of a bygone era no longer guarantees influence. The intelligence agencies that once thrived in the shadows — the CIA, Mossad, RAW — built their reputations on secrecy, interference, and manipulation. But that old geopolitical theatre is falling apart. The stage has changed, the audience has changed, and most importantly, the actors have changed. And yet, India appears to have missed this cue. New realities are unfolding across South Asia, and they do not favor the old ways. Nowhere is this more evident than in Afghanistan, where India’s quiet but persistent ambition to shape outcomes through backdoor diplomacy and intelligence channels has all but collapsed.

While Delhi continues to speak the language of strategic influence, the region around it is writing a new narrative—one shaped by cooperation, infrastructure, and shared regional security. This new consensus is being crafted not in Washington or Tel Aviv, but in Beijing, Islamabad, and increasingly, Kabul. The recent trilateral meeting in Beijing between the foreign ministers of China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan marked more than another round of formal diplo-

macy. It was not merely a photo opportunity designed for headlines or high-level optics. It represented a turning point — a firm and public signal that the region is willing to chart its own course without relying on old power structures or distant patrons. The commitment to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into Afghanistan is more than an engineering blueprint.

It is a political declaration that development, not division, will shape South Asia’s future. The three foreign ministers — Ishaq Dar of Pakistan, Wang Yi of China, and Amir Khan Muttaqi of Afghanistan — came together not to issue threats or draw red lines but to offer a vision grounded in stability, connectivity, and pragmatism. In particular, the agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan to restore full diplomatic relations after a prolonged period of estrangement is a breakthrough that would have seemed impossible only a year ago. For two neighbors burdened by history and suspicion, the appointment of full-time ambassadors signals a willingness to move beyond grievance and towards governance. China, with its measured tone and carefully chosen words, played the role of facilitator rather than hegemon. Its decision to formally recognize the Taliban-appointed ambassador in Kabul and to post a full envoy long before others did speaks volumes about its approach.

It is not driven by ideology or global missionary ambitions, but by interests rooted in regional stability and economic opportunity.

Unlike the West, which too often ties recognition to impossible political conditions, China has chosen realism — a path that may offend purists, but one that earns credibility in the region. Security remains a shared concern. Terrorism, which knows no borders and respects no treaties, still threatens to unravel progress. Yet this meeting did not turn into a blame game. Instead, the three sides acknowledged that differences exist and must be managed through dialogue. They pledged to increase cooperation and share intelligence — not with outside powers, but among themselves. That the sixth round of talks will be held in Kabul is significant.

It suggests not only a rotation of host nations but a rotation of power — symbolic of a shift away from dependency and toward local stewardship of peace and security. This emerging trilateralism offers a new model for regional diplomacy. It is one that India, still trapped in the reflexes of Cold War realpolitik, has struggled to understand. The frustration is evident. India’s exclusion from this forum is not due to oversight but design. Its longstanding resistance to engaging with the Taliban-led government, coupled with its history of aligning with Western narratives in the region, has left it isolated at a moment when inclusivity has become a geopolitical asset. CPEC’s proposed expansion into Afghanistan could be a game changer for the region’s economy.

For a country that has suffered decades of conflict and sanctions, the arrival of trade

routes, investment, and energy corridors could mean more than economic recovery. It could represent political stabilization, social development, and, perhaps, a future defined more by bridges than by bunkers. But this future is not guaranteed. It depends on continuity, infrastructure, and above all, trust — a resource often more scarce than capital. China’s presence in this evolving story remains critical. Its consistent support of Pakistan, especially during its economic struggles, has been more than rhetorical.

China has stood by its commitments, from infrastructure to energy, and is now inviting other nations to participate in CPEC’s second phase.

This openness is not just about inclusion but about reshaping the political geography of South Asia. India, Israel and the United States must now confront a region that is no longer willing to be choreographed by distant capitals.

New alliances are forming, new dialogues are taking root, and new aspirations are driving policy. For India, the challenge is clear: adapt or be left behind. This is not a region waiting to be saved or shaped from the outside. It is one beginning to write its own story — with its own voice, its own priorities, and its own future.

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Radicalization is not destiny

By Atiq Raja



Radicalization has crept into the heart of our modern world, not with the noise of warplanes or the sound of marching boots, but through the quieter corridors of disillusionment, abandonment, and anger.

It is not a monster lurking in foreign lands or hidden corners—it is, increasingly, a human experience unfolding in plain sight. And yet, we keep looking away. For decades now, societies have wrestled with the question: why do ordinary people, many of them young, turn to extreme ideologies? From the crowded lanes of Karachi to the suburbs of Europe, from digital spaces to prison cells, radicalization has become one of the most profound threats to peace—not just because of its violence, but because of the silence and neglect that often precede it.

To understand radicalization is not merely to define it. It is to step inside the fragile mind of someone who feels discarded by society, told that they don’t belong, and then offered a story that finally makes them feel significant. That story may come wrapped in religious vocabulary or political slogans, in brotherhood chants or

revolutionary promises. The ideology may differ, but the pattern remains tragically familiar. It begins, often, with a question: who am I? For many, especially young people in fractured communities or marginalized groups, the answer is not clear. Identity can feel like a maze, and radical ideologies offer a map. In homes where children grow up feeling invisible, or in societies where certain groups are treated as lesser, radical voices step in with seductive answers.

They provide meaning, urgency, and purpose. They offer the illusion of power to those who feel powerless. Then there are the injustices—real or perceived—that harden these sentiments. Whether it’s political oppression, economic inequality, or a foreign drone strike that kills civilians, such wounds fester in silence. These grievances are not created by extremists, but they are expertly exploited by them. Radical movements are built not just on doctrine but on human pain. Technology has accelerated this process. In the digital world, a young man struggling with loneliness or confusion may fall down a rabbit hole of rage and conspiracy within hours. The algorithms don’t ask questions—they amplify what’s already lurking in the corners of our minds. Extremists have learnt to speak the language of youth: memes, music, emotion. And often, they get there before parents, teachers, or elders can.

Religion, too, is weaponized—not in its essence, but in its distortion. Holy books are cherry-picked, stripped of context and compassion, and reassembled as battle cries. In communities where religious education is reduced to memorization rather than understanding, where nuance is replaced by dogma, the doors to interpretation remain shut. It is not faith that radicalizes, but the vacuum left when genuine spiritual guidance is absent. Education, or the lack of it, is another critical fault line. When schools punish curiosity and reward obedience, they fail to equip young minds with the tools to question propaganda. A classroom should be a space where history is examined critically, where ethics are debated, and where diversity is understood, not feared. Instead, too many are taught only to follow, not to think.

Yet, even with all this, radicalization is not inevitable. It is a process—and that means it can be interrupted. But this requires more than just counter-terrorism strategies. It calls for a collective reimagining of society. We must begin by asking: who are we leaving behind? Governments must do more than chase threats; they must remove the conditions that allow extremism to grow. This means fairness in law, justice in policing, and equality in opportunity. A young person who feels seen and heard is far less likely to follow a path

of destruction. Communities must become places of care and accountability. Families, teachers, imams, social workers—they are our first responders, often spotting the early signs long before the security agencies do.

There are stories from around the world of individuals who left violent groups because someone, somewhere, showed them kindness. Because someone took the time to listen. Because someone believed they were more than the worst thing they had done. These are not just stories of deradicalization—they are stories of redemption. And they remind us of a crucial truth: nobody is born an extremist. Let us stop treating radicalization as if it were some distant virus, to be eradicated with force. Let us treat it as a message from the margins—a signal that our societies have failed to include, to protect, to love. The antidote is not surveillance—it is solidarity. Not judgement, but justice. Not walls, but bridges. In the end, we must build a world where the only thing radical is our commitment to each other. Because the greatest act of defiance against extremism is to believe in the humanity of those who have lost their way—and to help them find it again.

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Turning sun into sustenance

By Ghulam Hussain Baloch



For years, Balochistan has been where promises go to die. Despite being Pakistan’s largest province by land-mass and a trove of natural wealth, it remains stubbornly excluded from basic amenities. Its lifeblood—agriculture—depends not on innovation or state support, but on a daily struggle for water in a region where rain is rare and canals are a myth. With the land parched and underground aquifers shrinking, tube wells remain the only means of irrigation, and they rely heavily on electricity and diesel—both as unreliable as they are unaffordable. Enter the state’s gleaming promise: solarization. A plan hailed as modern, green, and sustainable, aiming to replace power-hungry tube wells with solar energy, liberating farmers from blackouts and soaring diesel costs. At first glance, the proposition makes sense.

No monthly bills, no environmental damage, no dependence on erratic grid supply. For the desperate farmer, it held the glimmer of self-reliance and an end to the tyranny of the power switch. But this too, like so many other interventions in Balochistan, is a tale of half-truths and unrealized potential. While the state announced the scheme with a flourish, the devil—as always—was in the detail. The average cost of a functional solar-powered irrigation setup runs well above Rs4 million, yet the government’s contribution is capped at Rs2 million. The burden of the remaining cost falls squarely on farmers, many of whom operate on subsistence margins and cannot dream of affording the rest. For the small and medium farmer, solarization is not a solution—it’s a mirage.

Even the subsidy itself has become a tool of political patronage. Access remains skewed in favor of the well-connected, with ordinary farmers shut out by opaque procedures and rampant corruption. What should have been a lifeline is instead a symbol of exclusion. The problems don’t

stop there. Once installed, the systems demand maintenance—solar panels, batteries, inverters all prone to faults. But Balochistan’s rural districts are solar deserts in more ways than one. Technical support is scarce to nonexistent. When a system breaks, there’s no one to fix it—unless one can afford to import help from the cities. For many, their expensive setups lie dormant, mocked by the very sun they were supposed to harness.

Then there is the most basic of challenges: geology. In swathes of Balochistan, groundwater lies hundreds of feet below. Many of the subsidized solar systems simply aren’t built to draw water from such depths. Farmers, forced to return to diesel pumps, are left worse off than before—disillusioned and in debt. Adding insult to injury is the market’s flood of cheap, substandard equipment. Panels that fade after a year, batteries that die without warning, warranties that vanish with the vendor—there is no quality control, no enforcement, and no accountability. To salvage the program from becoming another

footnote in the long history of failed provincial promises, the government needs more than press releases. Transparent and inclusive subsidy mechanisms are non-negotiable.

Technical training centers must be established to empower local communities to maintain their systems. Only certified, high-quality equipment should be allowed into the supply chain, and predatory vendors must be held accountable. And perhaps most critically, low-interest credit facilities must be made available so that smallholders can afford the up-front investment. Beyond technology, this is a question of planning, of governance, of political will. Solar energy is not just a machine—it is a lifeline that, if mishandled, becomes a weight too heavy to bear. The sun can still power Balochistan’s agriculture, but only if the state stops casting shadows over its own promises.

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Crisis communication in defense strategy

By Abdullah Haroon



In the modern era, warfare is no longer confined to battlefields—it extends into narratives, perceptions and strategic messaging. Pakistan’s Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) has emerged as a critical force in shaping the country’s defence diplomacy, ensuring that military actions are not just executed but understood in the right context. The May 2025 crisis between Pakistan and India was a defining moment, where communication became as vital as military strategy itself. Gone are the days when wars were fought solely with weapons; today, information is a weapon in its own right.

ISPR’s role has evolved beyond traditional military briefings—it now operates in a hybrid warfare environment, where controlling the narrative is as crucial as controlling territory. During the May 2025 escalation, Pakistan’s ability to manage global perception through strategic messaging played a decisive role in preventing further conflict. The crisis began with India’s Operation Sindoor, targeting Pakistan. Pakistan’s response, Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, was swift and calculated, focusing on military installations rather than civilian areas. However, beyond the battlefield, ISPR ensured that

the world understood Pakistan’s stance—not as an aggressor, but as a nation defending its sovereignty.

While Pakistan maintained a transparent and strategic approach to crisis communication, Indian media took a drastically different route, fuelling misinformation and nationalist hysteria. Several prominent Indian news networks unleashed a barrage of false claims, ranging from fabricated reports of Pakistani fighter jets being shot down to exaggerated victories that never occurred. Sensationalist coverage falsely suggested that Pakistan had requested a ceasefire, a claim categorically denied by ISPR. Some outlets even aired doctored visuals, falsely presenting footage from other conflicts as evidence of Indian strikes on Pakistani cities. This reckless media propaganda not only misled the Indian public but also escalated tensions, making diplomatic resolution more challenging.

The spread of misinformation during such critical moments highlights the danger of unchecked media narratives, reinforcing the need for responsible journalism in conflict reporting. Crisis communication is not just about external messaging—it is also about internal stability. In times of conflict, public morale can determine national resilience. ISPR’s approach was not limited to military updates; it actively engaged with citizens, reinforcing national unity and confidence.

Statements from Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry emphasized Pakistan’s preparedness, reassuring the public that the country was not seeking war but was ready to defend itself.

Moreover, ISPR’s use of digital platforms ensured that misinformation did not spread unchecked. In an era where social media can amplify false narratives, ISPR’s ability to control the flow of information was instrumental in maintaining domestic stability. The May 2025 crisis demonstrated that communication is as powerful as military strength. Pakistan’s ability to shape narratives, counter misinformation and maintain diplomatic credibility was a testament to ISPR’s strategic role. Moving forward, Pakistan must enhance digital diplomacy to engage with global audiences more effectively, ensuring that the country’s narrative is shaped through authentic engagement rather than reactive statements.

Strengthening real-time crisis response mechanisms will be crucial in preventing misinformation, ensuring that Pakistan’s stance remains clear and reinforcing the country’s sovereignty. Investing in media training for defence officials is also imperative, as clear and authoritative messaging can enhance Pakistan’s credibility in the global arena. In an age where wars are fought on multiple fronts, ISPR’s role in crisis communication will continue to be a defining factor in Pakistan’s defence diplomacy, ensuring that

national security is not just about military strength but also about how effectively the country conveys its position to the world. The ability to control narratives, counter propaganda and maintain diplomatic integrity will shape Pakistan’s future engagements, proving that in modern warfare, words can be just as powerful as weapons.

In today’s volatile geopolitical climate, narrative control is no longer a luxury—it is a necessity for survival. The effectiveness of Pakistan’s ISPR lies in its ability to counter disinformation with clarity, discipline and strategic foresight. Unlike traditional warfare, hybrid conflict thrives on confusion, manipulation and psychological disruption. During the May 2025 crisis, ISPR’s real-time updates, public briefings and responsible use of digital platforms not only informed global audiences but also neutralized attempts to delegitimize Pakistan’s position. This clarity helped avoid diplomatic isolation and galvanized domestic support at a time when morale could have faltered. In an era where social media platforms can turn falsehoods viral within seconds, Pakistan’s communications model must be studied as a vital component of national defence.

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Pakistan brands India's proxy war 'Fitna-e-Hindustan'

Pakistan's interior secretary condemned the school bus attack in Khuzdar as a 'Fitna-e-Hindustan' act under RAW's supervision, vowing justice will be served

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: The recent brutal attack on a school bus in Khuzdar has been strongly condemned by Interior Secretary Capt. (Retd.) Muhammad Khurram Agha, who labelled it an act of terrorism orchestrated by the group 'Fitna-e-Hindustan' under the direct supervision of India's intelligence agency, RAW. Speaking alongside DG ISPR Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry at a press conference, the Interior Secretary pledged to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Preliminary investigations, the Interior Secretary revealed, indicate that the Khuzdar attack was carefully planned by this proxy terror group, with backing from India's RAW agency. Lieutenant General Chaudhry reiterated Pakistan's readiness to face any further provocations, warning India of the consequences of its aggressive tactics.



Khurram Agha disclosed that captured terrorists admitted to conducting attacks on behalf of Fitna-e-Hindustan, a group implicated in orchestrating years of violence in Pakistan. He pointed to Pakistan's sustained efforts to expose India's two-decade-long state-sponsored terrorism campaign, citing evidence presented at the United Nations and earlier to India's Prime Minister.

Since April 2024, Fitna-e-Hindustan has been targeting innocent civilians in

Balochistan, resulting in dozens of deaths. The DG ISPR referenced the March 11 Jafer Express bombing, which killed over 30 people, including women and children, as one of the major attacks. He questioned the rationale behind the May 6 and 7 assaults, highlighting intelligence reports showing India's activation of proxy terror groups Fitna-ul-Khawarij and Fitna-e-Hindustan to carry out 33 attacks between May 6 and 10.

Lieutenant General Chaudhry condemned

India's ongoing support for terrorism, branding the violent incidents on May 21 as the "terrorist and oppressive face of India," disconnected from any legitimate local political or ethnic struggle. He detailed recent brutal attacks, including killings in Noshki on April 12, assaults on laborers in Tump Kech on April 28, and an IED blast in Harnai on February 14 that claimed ten lives. Other attacks, such as those on the Jafer Express and in Lasbela, targeted civilians and security personnel alike.

Emphasizing India's role in arming these groups with advanced weapons, the DG ISPR condemned Indian media for glorifying attacks inside Pakistan, including the October 6 assault on Chinese nationals in Karachi linked to RAW-backed groups. He criticized India's celebrations following the Khuzdar attack, describing them as unprecedentedly callous.

Gohar visits SMQ, Pervaiz Elahi, Ejaz Ch

News Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar met senior party leaders Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pervaiz Elahi and Senator Ejaz Chaudhry during a brief visit to Lahore, the party confirmed on Thursday.

The meetings were largely described as personal visits to inquire about the health of the party's ailing leadership, many of whom have been facing prolonged legal and medical troubles in recent months.

According to sources, Barrister Gohar first called on PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who is currently under treatment at a hospital in Lahore due to health complications. Qureshi's daughter, Mehr Bano Qureshi, was also present during the meeting. The two leaders were said to have exchanged views on political matters during the visit.

Later in the day, Barrister Gohar also met Senator Ejaz Chaudhry and former Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi. Both meetings were held at separate locations and focused primarily on extending good wishes and expressing solidarity. When asked about the nature of his engagements in Lahore, the PTI chairman clarified that the visits were not political in nature.

118 officers graduate at Navy War College

By Faizan Khan

LAHORE: The 54th convocation of Pakistan Navy War College was held in Lahore, with Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf as the guest of honor. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), degrees were awarded to 118 officers, including 44 from allied countries.

In his address, Admiral Naveed Ashraf highlighted the changing nature of warfare and emphasized the urgent need to understand emerging threats to maritime security. He pointed out that recent tensions between Pakistan and India clearly demonstrate the evolving character of conflict. In this context, he stressed that conventional military strategies must be adapted, especially given the increasing role of non-state actors.

Admiral Ashraf underlined that traditional military approaches need to evolve to effectively counter unconventional warfare tactics. The ceremony concluded with the distribution of degrees to successful graduates and was attended by senior military officials, civilian dignitaries, and families of course members.

PM calls on industries to embrace modern technology

The prime minister emphasized that a stronger government-private sector partnership is essential to securing Pakistan's place on the global economic stage

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has called for the rapid introduction of modern technology across Pakistan's industries, emphasizing innovation as the cornerstone for transforming the country into a formidable economic power. Speaking at a meeting with presidents of chambers of commerce from across the nation, he portrayed this as a critical moment for Pakistan's economic revival, following what he termed a "battle for truth" that has united the government and people in pursuit of shared prosperity.

The prime minister highlighted the importance of closer cooperation between the government and the private sector, stressing that this partnership is vital to placing Pakistan on the global economic map. "Economic self-reliance is the goal, and we must energize the private sector to achieve it," he said, signaling a commitment to empowering businesses of all sizes.

Sharif outlined several measures aimed at supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which



he described as the backbone of the economy. These steps include simplifying business regulations and reducing operational costs — key factors he believes will stimulate production and create employment opportunities. Efforts are also underway to make commercial loans more accessible and to lower electricity tariffs, moves designed to ease financial burdens on manufacturers and entrepreneurs.

Reiterating the urgent need for industrial modernization, the prime minister stressed that embracing modern technology is essential to keep Pakistan's industries competitive and aligned with international standards. "We must bring modern technology into our industries to stay competitive and meet global standards," he

declared, underscoring the high stakes involved.

On taxation, Sharif sent a firm message that tax evasion would not be tolerated, promising robust enforcement measures. He framed a fair and efficient tax system as crucial for strengthening Pakistan's economic foundation and ensuring that growth benefits the wider population.

This meeting comes at a time when Pakistan faces significant fiscal and industrial challenges, with the government seeking to signal a shift towards economic pragmatism and private sector engagement. Shehbaz Sharif's remarks reflect a clear intention to harness innovation and collaboration as pillars of Pakistan's path towards economic resilience and growth.

Pakistan rejects baseless allegations by Indian PM

By Asghar Ali Mubarak

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan has condemned recent statements by India's leadership as deliberate attempts to escalate tensions between the two countries. He stressed that linking Pakistan to terrorism is entirely baseless and runs contrary to established facts.

Calling on the international community to take serious note of India's "hateful and irresponsible rhetoric and behavior," Khan emphasized that such false accusations and aggressive military claims violate the UN Charter and international law. He reiterated Pakistan's role as a vital partner in the global fight against terrorism, warning that its steadfast commitment to peace should never be mistaken for weakness.

"Pakistan possesses full capability to safeguard its sovereignty and will respond firmly to any aggression," he declared, reaffirming Islamabad's readiness to defend



itself against any hostile actions. Khan highlighted Pakistan's ongoing and effective cooperation with international counterterrorism efforts, dismissing attempts to associate Pakistan with terrorism as misleading and unacceptable.

FO spokesperson warned that provocative statements by India threaten regional peace and stability, but stressed Pakistan's unwavering dedication to constructive dialogue and lasting peace.

Addressing the Kashmir dispute, he described it as the root cause of tension in South Asia. He stated that

Pakistan seeks a peaceful resolution in line with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and existing United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The spokesperson accused India of targeting Pakistan to divert global attention from the documented atrocities in occupied Kashmir. He urged condemned New Delhi's recent suspension of pilgrim access via the Kartarpur Corridor starting from 7 May. Khan stressed that Pakistan's side remains fully open and welcoming to Sikh pilgrims, underscoring Islamabad's respect for Sikh religious freedom.

Russia-Ukraine prisoners' swap completed: Trump

News Desk

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has announced the completion of a significant prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine, a development that has drawn attention amid the prolonged conflict between the two nations. In a statement shared on social media, Trump congratulated both sides for reaching this milestone, though he refrained from offering specific details about the nature or scale of the swap.

Reports from news agencies indicate that this announcement follows recent talks held last week between Russian and Ukrainian officials. During these discussions, the two sides reportedly agreed to exchange approximately 1,000 prisoners, a considerable number that highlights the scale of the arrangement.

This prisoner swap is being seen as one of the rare instances of cooperation between the two countries amid ongoing hostilities and diplomatic stalemates.

Trump imposes 50pc tariff on EU goods starting 1 June

News Desk

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has announced that the United States will impose a sweeping 50 percent tariff on goods imported from the European Union starting 1 June, escalating trade tensions with the bloc. In a statement reported by news agencies in Washington, Trump said he has formally recommended the new tariff, claiming the EU was created "with the sole purpose of taking advantage of the United States on trade."

"It has always been extremely difficult dealing with the European Union on trade," the president remarked, suggesting that the bloc's policies have unfairly benefited its members at the expense of American industry.

The move marks one of the most aggressive trade measures taken by the Trump administration against a key US ally. It's expected to affect a wide range of European exports, from cars and machinery to wine and cheese, though details



of the targeted products have yet to be made public.

Analysts warn the tariff could provoke a sharp response from Brussels, potentially leading to a retaliatory tariff regime and straining already fragile US-EU relations. Trade experts also point out that such a blanket tariff could raise prices for American consumers and disrupt supply chains across multiple industries. In a statement posted to social media, Trump said that Apple "will have to pay a 25 percent tax" on all iPhones made outside the US and sold within the country. "I've already informed Tim Cook," the president added, referring to Apple's chief executive.

Federal budget for 2025-26 delayed amid ongoing IMF negotiations

Finance ministry insiders reveal the postponement reflects deepening rifts with the IMF over key budget proposals yet to be resolved

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has confirmed that Pakistan's budget for the fiscal year 2025-26 will now be presented on 10 June, marking a delay from the initially scheduled date of 2 June. The Ministry of Finance announced alongside this that the Economic Survey, which offers an annual review of the country's economic performance, will be released a day earlier on 9 June.

Insiders within the finance ministry suggest the postponement stems from unresolved differences with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over critical budgetary proposals. After two rounds of intensive negotiations held earlier today—one in the morning and another in the afternoon—Pakistan and the IMF failed to reach a consensus. The talks were led by the finance secretary, accompanied by the chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and other senior officials.

Pakistan reportedly put forward several proposals aimed at easing the tax



burden on salaried workers and reducing taxes on industry, seeking to lessen business costs amid economic pressures.

In addition, the government proposed significant cuts in both development and non-development expenditures, signaling a bid to tighten fiscal discipline. The country also shared projections for increasing tax and non-tax revenues and introduced plans to improve revenue collection at the provincial level. This includes introducing a mechanism for agricultural income tax, a particularly sensitive topic that has long sparked debate.

The finance ministry has indicated that discussions with the IMF will continue into next week, underscoring the ongoing uncertainty

as Islamabad strives to align its budget with the Fund's requirements. Under the current loan program, Pakistan remains committed to preparing its budget in consultation with the IMF, meaning the final fiscal targets are likely to reflect the Fund's conditions.

As the budget presentation date approaches, all eyes are on policymakers in Islamabad, who must balance the demands of international lenders with domestic political realities. The government faces the difficult challenge of meeting IMF conditions without deepening public hardship or sparking political unrest, a tightrope walk that will shape Pakistan's economic trajectory for the year ahead.

Pakistan, UK to boost criminal data sharing

By Aziz Khatri

KARACHI: Inspector General of Sindh Police Ghulam Nabi Memon chaired a meeting to strengthen criminal intelligence sharing between Pakistan and the United Kingdom through Interpol. The meeting focused on the UPSCALE program—an initiative by Adam Smith

International aimed at improving the exchange of information on criminal offenders between the two countries.

Officials were briefed on how to enhance the effectiveness of data sharing through Interpol. Discussions centered on developing mechanisms to exchange data on convicted and suspected individuals

in the UK, particularly those involved in sexual offences, and on collaborative monitoring systems with partner countries. The representative from Adam Smith International noted that the UK actively tracks individuals involved in serious crimes and issues surveillance requests through Interpol when they travel to their native countries or

cities.

These are shared with national and provincial authorities as well as law enforcement agencies. Each province in Pakistan, along with federal agencies, has established Interpol desks and designated focal persons to manage such exchanges. However, delays caused by lengthy procedures remain a challenge.

Dar backs PSDP for economic uplift through employment

By our correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has underlined the pivotal role of the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) in shaping a more equitable and economically resilient Pakistan, stating that the upcoming PSDP for 2024-25 will serve as a catalyst for employment generation, poverty alleviation, and regional balance.

Presiding over a high-level meeting on the program's formulation, Dar brought together ministers from planning, economic affairs, food security, and



other senior bureaucrats to assess the state of ongoing development schemes and frame the agenda for the next financial year. The session laid bare the complex economic landscape facing the country, with officials

flagging growing financial limitations that continue to shadow Pakistan's development ambitions.

In response, a clear emphasis was placed on the need for robust public-private partnerships. A sub-

committee has been constituted to facilitate these collaborations, with the aim of leveraging private capital and expertise to complement state-led initiatives. This approach, Dar noted, was no longer optional but essential to sustaining momentum amid shrinking fiscal space.

The Deputy Prime Minister directed that the PSDP must reflect Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's 'Udaan Pakistan' vision — a blueprint rooted in accelerated growth, inclusive development, and national cohesion. Projects tied to key sectors such as energy,

transport, water infrastructure, agriculture, technology, and particularly the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) were identified as top priorities.

Participants in the meeting reached consensus on prioritizing underserved regions, reiterating that national development could not be meaningful without bridging regional disparities. The conversation also shifted to the importance of improving productivity, especially in rural and industrial sectors, to unlock the country's economic potential.