



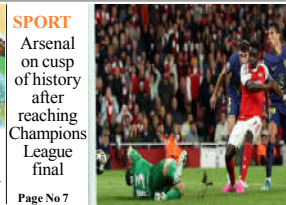
BALUCHISTAN
Battle of Truth Ceremony
Highlights National Unity...
Page No 5



INTERNATIONAL
Motorbike gunmen kill BJP political
aide in India's West Bengal
Page No 3



NATIONAL
4 children killed, 20 people
injured as roof of classroom...
Page No 8



SPORT
Arsenal
on cusp
of history
after
reaching
Champions
League
final
Page No 7

First Digital, Print Daily of Balochistan

Editor: Asim Khan.

Rs. 10.00 Vol. VII: No. 204

Email address: dquettavoices@gmail.com
Website: www.quettavoices.com

Friday 08, May, 2026

QUETTA VOICE

'No one can harm Pakistan; we are ready to respond to any aggression': DG ISPR on Marka-e-Haq anniversary

NEWS DESK:

Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations, Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, on Thursday, said that "no one can harm Pakistan", as we inflicted a crushing defeat on an enemy five times larger across all fronts, adding that the armed forces were ready to respond to any future aggression.

The term "Marka-e-Haq" refers to the 2025 conflict with India, which began with the April 22 Pahalgam attack and concluded with a ceasefire on May 10 following Operation Bunyanum Marsoos.

Addressing a press conference marking one year since the completion of Marka-e-Haq, accompanied by senior officers of the Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Air Force, he congratulated the nation on the occasion. He said Pakistan had inflicted a humiliating defeat on India across all fronts.

Lt Gen Chaudhry said, "A year ago, we ground India's pride into the dust. We have always said that no one can harm Pakistan. We were ready then, and we are ready now; if anyone has any doubt, we have shown them one episode of it".

"Pakistan defeated the enemy on every front and changed the nature of warfare during Marka-e-Haq, stating that Pakistan achieved success in multi-domain warfare across air, land, sea, and cyber domains," he added.

DG ISPR said India had long propagated a false narrative accusing Pakistan of involvement in terrorism and had conducted false flag operations for this purpose, adding that allegations were levelled against Pakistan within minutes of the Pahalgam incident without investigation.

He further added that India's "terrorism drama" has been buried forever, calling India itself the biggest terrorist. He challenged India to identify which terrorist camp it targeted, and said that India orchestrated terrorism against its own people to blame others.

DG ISPR said India was facilitating terrorism and that all terrorist incidents in Pakistan involved India and Afghanistan. He added that Afghanistan's so-called "foreign minister" sought assistance from India.

He also pointed out that In-



dia had failed to produce evidence regarding the Pahalgam incident. He noted that an FIR was registered within ten minutes of the event, yet a year later, no proof had surfaced.

Lt Gen Chaudhry said that what happened in Marka-e-Haq was known not just in Pakistan, but by every child in India and also advised India to speak the truth, adding that Hindutva ideology was being imposed on minorities in India.

Indian politicians appeared more like warriors than statesmen and said India's professional military had been compromised by politics and India was using Fitna-al-Khawarij and Fitna-al-Hindustan out of frustration over

its defeat, he said.

The term Fitna al-Khawarij is used by the state to refer to terrorists affiliated with the banned TTP. He added that Pakistan was the principal contributor to regional stability and efforts for peace, stressing that war between two nuclear states would be madness.

DG ISPR announced that a "small glimpse" of Pakistan's power potential would be shown to the public on August 14, so that "they cannot say later that they weren't told." He vowed to defend Pakistan's security and sovereignty at all costs.

He also added that Kashmir was not India's internal matter but a globally recognised dispute

with pending UN resolutions. India was committing atrocities against Muslims in Kashmir and citizens in Manipur.

DG ISPR emphasised the significance of the mutual defence pact between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, underscoring Pakistan's pivotal role in guarding the two holiest sites in Islam.

In response to a question, he said that Pakistan was chosen to protect Harman Shareefain (the Masjid al-Haram in Makkah and the Masjid-e-Nabawi in Madinah), and "protecting these sacred sites is intrinsically linked to Saudi Arabia's national security." He further stressed that any threat to Saudi Arabia would be considered a direct threat to Pa-

kistan. Chaudhry described the defence pact as a "manifestation" of the longstanding ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which span several decades and cover multiple domains. "We will fulfil our duty and honour the commitments we have made," he said.

In response to a question regarding the status of Operation Ghazab lil Haq in Afghanistan, he stated that the operation was still ongoing. Chaudhry emphasised that Pakistan harbours no animosity towards Afghanistan or its people. "We have nothing against Afghanistan, especially the people of Afghanistan," he said, underlining Pakistan's longstanding position as a friend and host to Afghan refugees.

The military spokesperson further highlighted Pakistan's role as "the best of brothers" and a host to Afghans, showcasing the nation's commitment to brotherhood and hospitality. "There's no better example of brotherhood and hospitality," he added.

He explained that the operation was an integral part of Pakistan's national response to terrorism. Rear Admiral Ali described Marka-e-Haq as a "historic and memorable" event. Addressing the press, Rear Admiral Shifaat Ali Khan described Marka-e-Haq as a "historic and memorable" event, where Pakistan's naval forces delivered a decisive blow to India's naval capabilities.

JUI-F Postpones Long March Against Madrasa Crackdown in Balochistan

NEWS DESK:

QUETTA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl has postponed its



planned long march towards Quetta after the provincial government assured the party that the ongoing crackdown on madrasas and arrests of seminary students would be stopped.

Speaking at a press con-

ference on Wednesday, Maulana Abdul Wasey said the protest, scheduled for May 10, was delayed following talks with the Balochistan govern-

ment. He said Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti assured the party that raids on religious seminars would end.

Abdul Wasey said JUI-F had planned the march to protest against alleged raids on

madrasas and the detention of students in several districts.

He warned that the party could resume protests if the government failed to fulfill its

commitments.

The issue of madrasa

crackdowns and action against

foreign students has triggered

political debate across

Balochistan, with religious parties demanding an immediate

halt to arrests and raids.

BHC Bans New Commercial Projects on Quetta's Joint Road

WEB DESK:

QUETTA: Balochistan High

Court has imposed an im-

mediate ban on all new

commercial activities and

construction projects on

Joint Road, while also sus-

pending a controversial

Pakistan Railways adver-

tisement for commercial

development in the area.

A two-member bench headed

by Chief Justice

Muhammad Kamran Khan

Malakhalil issued the in-

terim order during the hear-

ing of a constitutional peti-

tion related to traffic con-

gestion, encroachments,

and illegal commercial

construction in Quetta.

The court directed that no new

shops, plazas, hotels, mar-

kets, or commercial leas-

ing projects would be al-

lowed on Joint Road until

further orders.

Notices were also issued to

Pakistan Railways, the dis-

trict administration, and

other concerned depart-

ments.

The bench summoned the Di-

visional Superintendent of

Pakistan Railways in per-

son and ordered the

Deputy Commissioner

Quetta to submit a detailed

report on illegal commer-

cial activities and en-

croachments in the city.

During the proceedings, the

court expressed serious

concern over alleged vio-

lations of its 2016 anti-

encroachment ruling and

warned that road expan-

sion and traffic flow

projects would not be com-

pleted.

The restrictions on commercial

activities along Zarghoon

Road and Samungli Road

also remain in force under

previous court orders.

The court termed illegal con-

structions and worsening

traffic jams a matter of

public interest and directed

authorities to ensure strict

implementation of judicial

orders before the next

hearing.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

How Long Will Quetta Pay the Price for SSGC and Federal Negligence?

Editorial: Quetta is once again at the mercy of a winter crisis that has become all too familiar: low gas pressure, unannounced load shedding, and complete administrative silence. Every year, citizens are told to "bear with the situation" as temperatures fall and heaters, stoves, and geysers turn useless. Yet the authorities responsible — Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) and the federal energy managers — continue to operate without accountability.

A City Freezing While Authorities Look Away

The people of Balochistan are right to ask: Why must Quetta suffer the same crisis every winter while no structural reform is introduced? Why are consumers forced to pay heavy bills for a service that barely exists? And why do officials in Karachi and Islamabad continue to treat Balochistan's gas issues as a seasonal inconvenience rather than a governance failure?

Dispute Balochistan being an energy-producing region, its residents struggle every winter for the very resource extracted from their own soil. This contradiction reflects a deep-rooted policy imbalance in the federation,

where Balochistan remains last on the priority list — not because of a shortage of resources, but because of a shortage of political will.

SSGC's Repeated Excuses and Decades of Mismanagement

The SSGC's performance adds another layer of frustration. Each year, the company offers the same explanations: "excessive demand," "pipeline pressure issues," "technical challenges."

Yet no one explains why these problems remain unresolved despite decades of complaints.

Why have there been no significant infrastructure upgrades? Why has the company failed to introduce a clear winter management plan for the public, and honest communication with consumers absent?

The unannounced nature of the load shedding exposes a complete disregard for public convenience. When outages are not scheduled or announced, families cannot plan meals, heating, or even basic daily routines. Hospitals and clinics struggle to maintain warm environments for patients. Small businesses suffer.

And in a city where temperatures can drop below freezing, such negligence is not

just inconvenient — it is dangerous.

Federal Government's Weak Oversight and Balochistan's Low Priority

The federal government cannot escape responsibility either. Energy management is a national issue, and the pattern of winter mismanagement in Balochistan reflects weak oversight, poor planning, and an unfair allocation of resources. The silence of policymakers during these crises sends a clear message: Quetta's suffering is not a priority.

What Quetta needs is not another round of hollow statements. It needs a transparent winter gas plan, proper infrastructure investment, honest communication with the public, and real accountability for SSGC. Most importantly, it needs the federal government to finally treat Balochistan as an equal stakeholder in national resource management.

The people of Quetta have endured enough. Their patience should not be mistaken for acceptance. Without decisive action, this recurring winter crisis will continue to expose not only the inefficiencies of SSGC but also the federal government's unwillingness to address long-standing injustices.

The Looming threat of Climate Crisis in Pakistan



Sardar Mengal:

Climate change is unleashing its worst effects in the form of heavy rainfalls and disastrous floods. Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change had already warned multiple times about dire consequences of climate change in Pakistan. The authorities should have been on their toes in response to the contours of the crisis but we witnessed everything otherwise.

Balochistan Vulnerable to Climate Crisis

It is noteworthy that almost 30 districts of Balochistan have been badly hit by the waves of floods-engulfing lives and property, converting everything into dust & debris and wreaking havoc all

around — couldn't merit breaking news on national media.

Prior disregard and later delayed response have multiplied inflictions of the catastrophe.

Loss of land communication has further isolated the stricken areas making true estimation of destruction more exhausting.

Timely decision and act can reduce the effect of Climate Change.

To stop ballooning problems into crisis; rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations should be carried out on full scale as the current pace is insufficient to meet the requirement. NDMA and PDMA need to reach out to the peripheral areas that are out of the

radar.

It's high time for the provincial and federal coalition government to pay special attention to those whose lives are at the stake. Political parties need to rise above the traditional politics and launch concerted efforts to help out the calamity stricken at the earliest. Social welfare organisations should come forward to heal the lesions of suffering humans. On national level, there should be special discourse and discussion on settlement and rehabilitation of the affected people.

In addition to ensuring: re-building of eroded infrastructure, compensation for losses, clean water, adequate supply of food, there should be numer-

ous measures in pipeline to overcome the post-flood outcomes such as increased risk of infectious diseases. The flood-stricken area can become a breeding ground for many health related problems. Supplying preventive medicines and upholding precautionary measures can halt the onslaught of infectious diseases.

The state machinery in its all forms should come into play to navigate a safe passage out of this hurricane of climate emergency enveloping us now.

The author is a final year MBBS student at King Edward Medical University Lahore, Pakistan. He can be reached on twitter via @SardarMengal11.

measures in pipeline to overcome the post-flood outcomes such as increased risk of infectious diseases. The flood-stricken area can become a breeding ground for many health related problems. Supplying preventive medicines and upholding precautionary measures can halt the onslaught of infectious diseases.

The state machinery in its all forms should come into play to navigate a safe passage out of this hurricane of climate emergency enveloping us now.

The author is a final year MBBS student at King Edward Medical University Lahore, Pakistan. He can be reached on twitter via @SardarMengal11.

IRC reaches to 29,000 out of school girls in Balochistan

By Shakoor Khan: International Rescue Committee (IRC) under its Teach & Educate Adolescent Girls with Community Help (TEACH) project reached out to 29,000 out-of-school girls of 5 districts of Balochistan including Pishin, Killa Abdullah, Nushki, Kharan and Chagai.

"IRC is striving hard to promote girls' education in Balochistan besides imparting vocational trainings on financial literacy and trades to make them financially independent," said Shareef Mengal, Head of IRC Balochistan during a policy dialogue titled "Improving future of girls' education in Balochistan held in collaboration with UK aid at local hotel here.

Balochistan Education Minister Naseebullah Mari was the chief guest while representatives from the Education ministry, Directorate of Special Education,

Literacy, Non-Formal Education & Human Rights Department, Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission, Balochistan Textbook Board, Policy Planning Implementation Provincial Institute of Teachers Education, Education Support Programme, Global Partnership of Education, German Agency for International Cooperation, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund Society for Community Strengthening and Promotion of Education, Balochistan, Institute for Development Studies and Practices, Japan International Cooperation Agency also attended the event.

The event hosted conversations with mul-



iple stakeholders including education experts and government functionaries on the barriers faced by girls in the province in pursuing their education and discussed possible solutions to combat those barriers.

Salient feature of the project IRC

While highlighting the salient feature of the project IRC chief in Balochistan Shareef Mengal said under the 'Girls Learn' stream of the project, 22,000 girls received classes on Package A, B and C of non-formal curriculum, while 4000 enrolled in mainstream formal schooling system.

Under 'Girls Earn'

stream of the project, 7000 girls completed Package A of the non-formal curriculum, out of these 7000 girls, 5000 received training on financial literacy and business development planning, 2400 girls received training on 8 vocational trades and toolkits and 250 girls received financial grants to start a business.

Naseebullah Mari, Education Minister Balochistan, on the occasion urged that "We must do our part to remove the barriers faced by girls in the region so that every girl can pursue her education and become a valuable member of society".

"The Government is making all out efforts to combat the low literacy rate which has affected

girls from all ethnic groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds,"

We are committed to assist and contribute to building economically prosperous, and educated Balochistan, so every child has access to education.

He however welcomed the support extended by the International Rescue Committee for providing educational and vocational training opportunities, saying he is very grateful for the on-ground initiative of community-based schools in Balochistan."

Abdul Rauf Baloch – Secretary Secondary Education on the occasion appreciated the contributions of IRC for girls' education in Balochistan.

He shared that education is a complex subject which cannot be discussed without WASH, health and other facilities.

This makes it a responsibility of all relevant departments and stakeholders who should play their role effectively.

Zain Ul Abedin Khan, Deputy Director Programs, IRC, in his remarks said that "We as a society need to commit to prioritize and focus on Girls' Education through adequate resources. Girls' education in Balochistan is one of the biggest challenges faced by the country and to deal with it we must work with innovative methods like Non-Formal Education."

He further added

that, "Over the years, we have realized that if girls are unable to reach school, all stakeholders need to fill the gap and provide access to life-long learning opportunities like productive skills and life-skills within communities.

The panel discussions established an opportunity for the policy makers and practitioners to understand that girl's education is correlated with lower rates of poverty and improved health outcomes. While stimulating dialogue, the stakeholders pledged to work together to eradicate the barriers to girls'

education by providing gender inclusive facilities and quality of education.

The event was a culmination of three sessions where the first was hosted to discuss the barriers faced by girls in pursuing their education. The panelists of the first session classified the barriers into 3 categories: Cultural, Economic and Service Delivery. The panelists recommended Accelerated Learning Programs (ALPs) as a viable option while integrated with skill-based trainings and digitizing education.

Initiatives to combat the barriers to education

The third and final session gave the TEACH clients an opportunity to express their personalized struggles in overcoming barriers to education.

Anam – client of TEACH project from Pishin shared that after joining TEACH ALP center, she can read books and newspapers. Simra from the same district shared that her parents don't allow travelling long distances to attend school but after opening of ALP center at doorstep, she was able to join the classroom for first time in her life. Haleema from Nushki district shared that her mother is the only breadwinner of home and works at households of others to earn income. Haleema shared that she is the only child of her family who can read, thanks to joining ALP center.

The second session was focused on sustainable initiatives to combat the barriers with the help of Non-Formal Education in bridging the gap between primary and secondary schooling.

Chairperson of the session, Mr. Abdul Khalique – Chief Planning Officer Policy, Planning, and Implementation Unit welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of solutions to these barriers.

Mr. Ashraf Gichki – Director Literacy and Non-Formal Education shared contribution of NFE department toward provision of second chance of education to out-of-school children.

Personal struggles in overcoming the barriers to education

The third and final session gave the TEACH clients an opportunity to express their personalized struggles in overcoming barriers to education.

Anam – client of TEACH project from Pishin shared that after joining TEACH ALP center, she can read books and newspapers. Simra from the same district shared that her parents don't allow travelling long distances to attend school but after opening of ALP center at doorstep, she was able to join the classroom for first time in her life. Haleema from Nushki district shared that her mother is the only breadwinner of home and works at households of others to earn income. Haleema shared that she is the only child of her family who can read, thanks to joining ALP center.

The event was a culmination of three sessions where the first was hosted to discuss the barriers faced by girls in pursuing their education. The panelists of the first session classified the barriers into 3 categories: Cultural, Economic and Service Delivery. The panelists recommended Accelerated Learning Programs (ALPs) as a viable option while integrated with skill-based trainings and digitizing education.

Initiatives to combat the barriers to education

The third and final session gave the TEACH clients an opportunity to express their personalized struggles in overcoming barriers to education.

Anam – client of TEACH project from Pishin shared that after joining TEACH ALP center, she can read books and newspapers. Simra from the same district shared that her parents don't allow travelling long distances to attend school but after opening of ALP center at doorstep, she was able to join the classroom for first time in her life. Haleema from Nushki district shared that her mother is the only breadwinner of home and works at households of others to earn income. Haleema shared that she is the only child of her family who can read, thanks to joining ALP center.

Trump's reversal on reopening Strait of Hormuz came after backlash from ally: NBC report

NEWS DESK: US President Donald Trump's sudden reversal on his plan to assist ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz followed a decision by a key Gulf ally to suspend the US military's use of its bases and airspace for the operation, NBC News reported Wednesday, citing sources.

Trump caught Gulf allies off guard when he announced "Project Freedom" on social media Sunday afternoon, the report said, frustrating leaders in Saudi Arabia.

In response, the Kingdom told the US it would not permit American aircraft to operate from Prince Sultan Air Base southeast of Riyadh or pass through Saudi airspace in support of the mission, the officials said.

A phone call between Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman reportedly failed to settle the matter.

The report added, forcing the president to halt Project Freedom in order to restore US military access to the vital airspace.

Other Gulf allies were also surprised, with Trump speaking to Qatari leaders only after the operation had already started.

The report quoted a Saudi source saying that Trump and the crown prince "have been in touch regularly."

Asked whether the announcement of Project Freedom had surprised Saudi leaders,



the source responded: "The problem with that premise is that things are happening quickly in real time."

The source added that Saudi Arabia was very supportive of the diplomatic efforts by Pakistan to broker an agreement between Iran and the US to end the conflict.

Hormuz must remain under Iran's control, foreign forces must leave region: ex-IRGC official

Al Jazeera reports that Mohsen Rezaei, a former commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and current member of Iran's Expediency Council, said Iran "will not negotiate the nuclear issue with anyone" and that control over the Strait of Hormuz must remain in Iranian hands, according to Iran's ISNA news agency.

"If control and management of the Strait of Hormuz pass out of Iran's hands, the enemy will once again weaponise it against Iran and its people," Rezaei warned.

The Iranian model emphasises that the region must provide its own security; foreign forces — whether American or European — must leave," he added, according to ISNA, as per Al Jazeera.

Iran says ports ready to provide support services to ships in Strait of Hormuz Amid continued tension over the Strait of Hormuz, Iran said Thursday that the country's ports are prepared to provide maritime services, technical support, supplies, and medical assistance to vessels operating in Hormuz and regional territorial waters.

The advisory came in a message from Iran's Ports and Maritime Organisation to commanders of commercial ships operating in regional waters, the official news agency IRNA reported.

According to the message, all vessels navigating territorial waters, particularly those located in Iranian waters and ports, can benefit when needed from supply services, fuel provision, health and medical services, as well as maintenance materials.

The organisation said the message would be broadcast through maritime communication networks and very high frequency (VHF) systems in the region three times daily for three days.

Tehran denies involvement in blast, fire on board South Korean vessel

Iran denied any involvement in the blast on board a South Korean ship in the Strait of Hormuz earlier this week, according to Al Jazeera.

"Iran firmly rejects and categorically denies any allegations regarding the involvement of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the incident involving damage to a Korean vessel in the Strait of Hormuz," Iran's embassy in Seoul said in a statement.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that the cause of the explosion and fire on board the South Korean-operated vessel would only be determined once the ship was brought to port.

Earlier, Trump had claimed on his Truth Social platform that Iran had fired on a South Korean cargo ship in the Strait.

The Iranian embassy also stated that, because the US and Israel have taken aggressive actions, Iran now views the Strait of Hormuz as a vital part of its "defensive geography."

It noted that security protocols in the strategic waterway have changed due to heightened tensions caused by "hostile forces and their allies."

Trump sees swift end to war

Trump predicted a swift end to the war with Iran as Tehran considered a US peace proposal that sources said would formally end the conflict while leaving unresolved key US demands that Iran suspend its nuclear programme and reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

An Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson cited by Iran's ISNA news agency said Tehran would convey its response, while Iranian lawmaker Ebrahim Rezaei, a spokesperson for parliament's powerful foreign policy and national security committee, described the proposal as "more of an American wish-list than a reality."

"They want to make a deal. We've had very good talks over the last 24 hours, and it's very possible that we'll make a deal," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office on Wednesday, saying later, "it'll be over quickly."

Trump has repeatedly "played up the prospect of an agreement to end the war that started on February 28, so far without success."

The two sides remain "at odds over a variety of difficult issues, such as Iran's nuclear ambitions and its control of the Strait of Hormuz, which before the war handled one-fifth of the world's oil and gas supply."

MSF said it had collected data from more than 200 mothers and newborns receiving treatment in neonatal intensive care units at hospitals in Khan Yunis and Gaza City between last June and January.

Its analysis found that more than half of the women were affected by malnutrition at some point during their pregnancy. A quarter of them were still malnourished during delivery.

The impact was clear: 90 per cent of the babies born to malnourished mothers were born prematurely and 64pc had low birth weight, the analysis found.

"Neonatal mortality was twice as high among infants born to mothers affected by malnutrition compared with those born to mothers without malnutrition," MSF said.

The medical charity also examined data from 313 infants under six months of age admitted to outpatient therapeutic feeding programmes in Khan Yunis between October 2024 and December 2025.

Motorbike gunmen kill BJP political aide in India's West Bengal

NEWS DESK: Gunmen on motorbikes in India's West Bengal ambushed and killed a political aide from the ruling Hindu nationalist party days after it swept state elections, police said Thursday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a resounding victory on Monday in the eastern state of more than 100 million people, taking 207 of the 294 assembly seats, for its first

ever state victory in West Bengal.

Chandranath Rath, 41, a close aide of West Bengal's BJP chief Suwendu Adhikari was shot dead late on Wednesday near his home in Kolkata.

Adhikari, the leader of the opposition in the state assembly, now tipped to become the state chief minister, called it "cold-blooded murder".

Motorbikes blocked Rath's vehicle, before the attackers opened fire in a barrage of around a dozen shots, hitting Rath multiple times in the heart.

"The shooting happened at about 11 pm on Wednesday — the bikes that stopped Rath's car have been seized," West Bengal police chief Siddhi Nath Gupta told AFP.

"The bikes had fake registration numbers, and we are looking for the assailants," Pritam Sengupta, a

doctor at Apollo Hospital told AFP, that Rath was "brought dead with multiple bullet injuries in his chest."

The killing brings the total killed since the results were announced on Monday to at least five.

West Bengal had been ruled by Modi's fierce critic and adversary, Mamata Banerjee, as chief minister since 2011.

Banerjee, leader of the regional All India Trinamool Congress (TMC), also lost her seat in the polls and has rejected the results.

Analysts say the BJP's victory in the largely Bengali-speaking state is one of its most significant since Modi was first elected prime minister in 2014, expanding its dominance beyond the Hindi-speaking heartland of north and central India.

The killing has added to political tensions in the state, with the BJP and TMC trading accusations over the deaths since the results.



France sends aircraft carrier to Middle East for possible Hormuz mission

NEWS DESK: France's aircraft carrier the Charles de Gaulle was on Wednesday heading towards the southern Red Sea to pre-position for a possible mission to restore navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, Paris said.

The move was intended to send "a signal that not only are we ready to secure the Strait of Hormuz but that we are also capable of doing so," an aide to President Emmanuel Macron told reporters.

Traffic in the strategic waterway, through which around one-fifth of the world's crude oil normally transits, has all but stopped since conflict erupted in the Middle East in late February.

Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer are leading a multinational mission towards restoring freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, which they say would be entirely defensive and only deployed once the



war ended.

Macron said on X he told his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian on Wednesday of his "deep concern" at escalation in the Gulf region amid stalling peace talks.

"All parties must lift the blockade of the strait, without delay and without conditions," he said on X, in reference to a US blockade of Iranian ports and Tehran's

own chokehold on the vital sea route.

The Charles de Gaulle, the flagship of the French navy, and its escorts were transiting through the Suez Canal en route to the southern Red Sea, the defence ministry said.

The decision was intended "to reduce the need to implement this initiative as soon as circumstances allow", the ministry said.

Doctors Without Borders says Israel has 'manufactured malnutrition crisis' in Gaza

NEWS DESK: Doctors Without Borders on Thursday accused Israel of having deliberately restricted food and aid in Gaza, creating a "manufactured malnutrition crisis" with particularly devastating impacts on infants and pregnant women.

The report also examined the harm done by the US- and Israeli-backed private organisation set up last year to largely replace UN distribution of aid in Gaza.

The medical charity, known by its French acronym MSF, based its case on an analysis of

the situation between late 2024 and early 2026 at four health facilities it supports in the Gaza Strip.

That analysis showed significantly higher levels of prematurity and mortality among infants born to malnourished mothers, and spikes in miscarriages, it said.

MSF linked these outcomes with Israel's blockade of essential goods and attacks on civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities.

"Insecurity, displacement, restrictions on aid, and limited access to food and medi-

cal care have had devastating consequences for maternal and newborn health," the charity said in a statement.

The situation remained "extremely fragile", despite a ceasefire in place since last October after two years of devastating conflict, it warned.

MSF called on the Israeli authorities to allow the unhindered entry of assistance and supplies into Gaza immediately.

"The malnutrition crisis is entirely manufactured," said Merce Rocaspana, MSF's medical referent for emergencies, said in the



Rubio to meet Pope Leo as Trump keeps up attacks on pontiff

NEWS DESK: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will meet Pope Leo at the Vatican on Thursday, "in a potentially fraught encounter as President Donald Trump has continued a series of disparaging attacks on the Catholic leader over the Iran war.

Catholicism also serves as Trump's national security adviser, was due to arrive at the Vatican's Apostolic Palace around 11:15am for the 'visit, the first between the pope and a Trump cabinet official in nearly a year.

The closed-door meeting 'is expected to last about a half-hour after which Rubio will also meet the Vatican's top diplomat, Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

Leo, the first US pope, drew Trump's ire after becoming a firm critic of the "US-Israeli war on Iran and the Trump administration's hardline anti-immigration policies."

The president has kept up an unprecedented series of public attacks on the pope in recent weeks, drawing a backlash from Christian leaders across the political spectrum.

On Monday, Trump falsely suggested the pope believed it was okay for Iran to obtain nuclear weapons and said Leo was "endangering a lot of Catholics" by opposing the war.

Leo told journalists "after the latest attack that he was spreading the Christian message of peace. The pope also firmly rejected the idea that he supported nuclear weapons, which

the Catholic Church teaches are immoral.

"The mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel, to 'preach peace,'" said the pope. "The Church has spoken out for years against all nuclear arms, on that there is no doubt."

US ambassador expects "frank" conversation

Leo, who on Friday marks his first year leading the 1.4-billion-member Church, has grown more outspoken on the world stage in recent weeks.

Rubio is Catholic, as is Vice President JD Vance. The two met Leo a year ago after attending the pope's inaugural mass.

Rubio said at a White House briefing on Tuesday that he expected to discuss Cuba and concerns over "religious freedom around the world with Leo.

He was flying to Rome without any press accompanying him on his plane, which is unusual for a US secretary of state.

The US ambassador to the Holy See, Brian Burch, told journalists earlier on Tuesday that the "conversation between the pope and a cabinet official was 'frank,'" he said. "Rubio 'is visiting Rome for two days."

Nation salutes its brave son SSP Ashraf Marth on his 29th martyrdom anniversary

ISLAMABAD (INP): Today is the 29th death anniversary of the nation's valiant son, SSP Ashraf Marth. Rich tributes were paid to Marth on the occasion for laying down his life in the line of duty. A

Quran Khawani was held, and special prayers were offered for the salvation of the soul of the deceased.

In this connection, SSP Ashraf Marth Shaheed Police Lines,

Gujranwala, CPO Gujranwala Sardar Ghous Gul Khan visited the memorial built in the honour of the late SSP and paid his respects there.

A police contingent presented a eulogy on

the occasion. Paying rich tributes to Marth, IGP Punjab Rao Abdul Kareem said that brave officers like him were the Punjab Police's pride.

He said that Marth made a name for himself

by performing his duties and showing leadership qualities and that the Punjab Police would never forget the sacrifices given by brave sons like him.

On 6th May 1997, while en route to his of-

fice in Gujranwala, Ashraf Marth was ambushed and assassinated in a targeted attack.

Following that, Gujranwala Police Lines was named after him. Ashraf Marth was

no ordinary officer. Described by peers as a man of immense discipline, unwavering resolve, and rare moral clarity, he dedicated his career to fighting crime and extremism at a time when Pakistan was engulfed in

sectarian violence. He believed that the police uniform was not just a job—it was a responsibility to shield the public from chaos and fear. And in the end, he paid the ultimate price for that belief.



GILGIFT: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributes solar panel under PM Free Solar Panel Scheme among beneficiaries from GB.

Naqvi inspects immigration facilities for Hajj pilgrims at Islamabad Airport

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday paid a surprise visit to Islamabad International Airport, where he reviewed the immigration facilities for Hajj pilgrims and other passengers.

The Interior Minister inspected the special counters set up under the 'Road to Makkah' programme where Pakistani Hajj pilgrims are being provided immigration facilities before they reach Saudi Arabia.

Mohsin Naqvi also met the staff on the spot and reviewed the arrangements.

Mohsin Naqvi inquired from the passengers about the immigration and other facilities.

Hajj pilgrims expressed satisfaction over the excellent arrangements for Saudi

immigration facilities at Islamabad Airport under the Road to Makkah programme and thanked Mohsin Naqvi for making it possible.

The process was very easy and no difficulty was encountered.

Hajj pilgrims said, adding immigration took a few minutes and the process was very easy. All immigration counters were functional on international arrivals. Immigration facilities were provided on time, passengers said.

The Interior Minister also inspected the Joint Search Check Post and instructed to make the search system more effective and faster. Mohsin Naqvi said security system is being upgraded with the use of modern technology.

Notorious bandit killed in Kashmir police intelligence operation

JACOBABAD (INP):

The Kashmir police said on Wednesday they had killed a notorious bandit during an intelligence-based operation against criminal groups operating in the area.

According to a police spokesperson, the operation was conducted under the supervision of Senior Superintendent, Police (SSP) Muhammad Murad Ghangro within the jurisdictions of Tangwani and Jamal police stations, where an intense exchange of gunfire took place between the police and armed suspects.

They said the alleged gang leader named Manzoor alias Manu Bhalkani, was killed during the operation, while another suspect identified as Malho Bhalkani, and two accomplices were

injured and escaped from the scene. The police said the body had been taken into custody and shifted to a nearby hospital for legal formalities.

A search operation was continuing in the area to apprehend the fleeing suspects, with additional police personnel deployed, they added.

The police said Manu Bhalkani as the prime suspect in the killings of two children, Muzammil and Gul Hassan Phanwar.

They said the Sindh government had been recommended to announce a reward Rs 5 million for his arrest.

According to police, the suspect was wanted in more than 60 criminal cases, including kidnapping for ransom, robbery, extortion, murder, attempted murder, attacks on police.

SC fixes hearing on Imaan Mazari's sentence suspension petition on May 12

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court has fixed May 12 for the hearing of petitions filed by human rights activist and lawyer Imaan Mazari and her husband, advocate Hadi Ali Chattha, seeking suspension of their prison sentences.

A three-member bench headed by Justice Shahid Waheed will hear the applications. The bench will also include Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghani and Justice Shafiq Siddiqui.

The couple approached the apex court after challenging a decision issued by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on February 19 in a case

linked to controversial anti-state social media posts.

Earlier, on April 27, the Supreme Court Registrar Office raised procedural objections to the petitions and returned them to the applicants. Four objections were identified by the registrar's office, including incomplete power of attorney documents and insufficient personal details provided by counsel.

In addition, the SC registrar's office also said the required certificate had not been submitted in the correct form. It is pertinent to mention here that just two weeks ago, on April 15, over 400 lawyers, belonging

to the Islamabad Bar Council, Islamabad High Court Bar Association and Islamabad District Bar Association, submitted a joint resolution in the Islamabad Bar to show support for human rights lawyer Imaan Mazari and her husband Hadi Ali Chattha, presently serving prison terms.

Four important demands were put forward in the resolution submitted by lawyers, including former presidents of the High Court Bar Riyasat Azad Attallah Kundi, Babar Mumtaz, Haider Syed, Zainab Janjua, Aimal Khan Mandokhel and others.

The lawyers demanded that petitions filed by the couple, seeking suspension in their sentences, be fixed for hearing at the earliest.

Their second demand was that a delegation of lawyers, including females, be allowed to visit the jail so that they could inspect the facilities provided to them there.

Their third demand was that since both husband and wife were highly educated, they be provided B-class in jail.

The lawyers said that since a jail trial was against the principles of justice, therefore, the couple should be heard in court for the hearing of their cases.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Malik participating in plantation drive under "Clean and Green Islamabad" initiative.

Marka-e-Haq: Pakistan military vows 'stronger' response to future aggression

RAWALPINDI (INP): The military has vowed an even stronger response to enemy forces if they resort to any hostilities as Pakistan marked the first anniversary of Marka-e-Haq.

On May 6-7 last year, India after leveling baseless and unfounded allegations against Pakistan for an attack in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir launched an attack on Islamabad, which was responded to with full force, humiliating New Delhi.

The more than 80-hour war eventually stopped as the United States, which was

pressured India to back down, and bolstering Pakistan's image as a "net regional stabiliser".

In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) mentioned that on the first anniversary of Marka-e-Haq, the Pakistan armed forces, particularly the Pakistan Air Force, proudly commemorate a defining chapter in the

nation's military history. "...one that strengthened national confidence, reaffirmed institutional resolve and validated PAF's relentless pursuit of maximisation and focused capability enhancement."

The historic milestone, it said, reflects the pride, confidence and spirit of the resilient Pakistani nation.

It reminded the world that Pakistan is a peace-loving country and its armed forces embody a mature and responsible strategic culture.

Every effort, preparation, and endeavour of Pakistan Armed Forces, the ISPR added, remains dedicated to preserving peace, promoting stability and ensuring security in the region. "Peace for Pakistan has always been inseparable from honour, dignity and sovereign equality."

The Pakistani armed forces remain fully cognisant of the evolving geopolitical and territorial integrity of Pakistan in the face of the evolving nature and parameters of modern air warfare.

"The successful execution of these operations, unprecedented in scope and novel in the history of aerial warfare, not only underscored the professional excellence of Pakistan Air Force but also renewed the pride, confidence and spirit of the resilient Pakistani nation."

It reminded the world that Pakistan is a peace-loving country and its armed forces embody a mature and responsible strategic culture.

Every effort, preparation, and endeavour of Pakistan Armed Forces, the ISPR added, remains dedicated to preserving peace, promoting stability and ensuring security in the region. "Peace for Pakistan has always been inseparable from honour, dignity and sovereign equality."

The Pakistani armed forces remain fully cognisant of the evolving geopolitical and territorial integrity of Pakistan in the face of the evolving nature and parameters of modern air warfare.

The military's media wing added that by mastering the skilful employment of multi-domain operations, the air force is consolidating its operational reorientation.

The military's media wing added that by mastering the skilful employment of multi-domain operations, the air force is consolidating its operational reorientation.

Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) urges unity for peaceful, prosperous Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has called for a renewed sense of national unity and reject division for a peaceful and prosperous Pakistan.

In a message on the occasion of completion of one year of Marka-e-Haq, he paid tribute to the bravery of armed forces emphasizing that they rose with discipline and determination to defend the homeland.

He said marking one year of Marka-e-Haq is a defining moment in our national journey, saying it is a story of courage, unity, and unwavering resolve. A story where

every soldier stood firm and every citizen stood behind them.

Deputy Prime Minister recalled that when aggression was imposed upon us last year, Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif acted with moral clarity. He said our response was measured, responsible, and precise, guided not by emotion, but by principle.

He said through this calibrated and resilient response, Pakistan sent a clear and unambiguous message that Pakistan stands for peace.

JKLF faction announces three-day conference in Birmingham on May 30

MIRPUR (INP): The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) faction led by Yasin Malik has announced a three-day conference in Birmingham, United Kingdom, beginning May 30, marking the group's founding day, according to an official statement released here. JKLF-Y acting Chairman, Raja Muzaffar said a steering committee composed of founding leaders based in the UK had called the conference as part of efforts to bring all JKLF factions onto a single platform under Malik's leadership. He said the initiative reflected the need for unity, clarity and a unified direction within the movement,

given the current political situation in illegal Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). "Only one JKLF under the leadership of Yasin Malik represents the true need of the freedom movement," Muzaffar said, adding that the effort aligned with the expectations of party workers and supporters. He expressed confidence that the initiative would lead to positive developments, adding the supporters would "hear good news in the near future. Muzaffar described Malik as the most trusted leader of the group and said the planned conference aimed to strengthen organisational unity.



QUETTA: Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Quetta Imran Shukat addressing a press conference.

False Indian narrative stood buried': DG ISPR highlights Marka-e-Haq impact

RAWALPINDI, May 07 (INP): Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said on Thursday that the Indian narrative of painting Pakistan as a source of terrorism had been "buried forever."

Addressing a press conference alongside Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) Rear Admiral Shiba Ali Khan and Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Projects) Air Vice Marshal Tariq Mahmood Ghazi to mark one year of Marka-e-Haq, the DG ISPR shared details of the strategic consequences of the operation.

He said the Indian narrative of painting Pakistan as a source of terrorism had been buried forever, as the international community now

fully understands that Pakistan is not a perpetrator but a victim of Indian-sponsored terrorism.

"For decades, India tried to create a narrative that Pakistan was involved in terrorism in India without presenting evidence," he said.

The second strategic consequence, the DG ISPR said, is the consolidation of Pakistan as a net security stabilizer in the region, in line with the vision of the founding father.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, that Pakistan is a peace-loving country seeking peace within and beyond its borders.

and how maturely Pakistan and its armed forces handled the situation.

The third strategic consequence is "unintentionally" related to the eastern neighbour, that is, the politicization of Indian military leadership and the militarization of Indian political leadership.

Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said He noted that India once had a professional army, but that within a year it had unfortunately become politicized.

He said that there were 10 strategic consequences of Marka-e-Haq, the first of which was that the Indian narrative of painting Pakistan as a source of terrorism stood buried.

He said that there were 10 strategic consequences of Marka-e-Haq, the first of which was that the Indian narrative of painting Pakistan as a source of terrorism stood buried.

He said that there were 10 strategic consequences of Marka-e-Haq, the first of which was that the Indian narrative of painting Pakistan as a source of terrorism stood buried.

He said that there were 10 strategic consequences of Marka-e-Haq, the first of which was that the Indian narrative of painting Pakistan as a source of terrorism stood buried.

He said that there were 10 strategic consequences of Marka-e-Haq, the first of which was that the Indian narrative of painting Pakistan as a source of terrorism stood buried.

Battle of Truth Ceremony Highlights National Unity and Youth Development

QUETTA: An important ceremony titled "Battle of Truth" was organized by the Balochistan Centre of Excellence under the Government of Balochistan, bringing together government officials, civil society representatives, students, and people from various walks of life.

The event was attended by Provincial Minister for Planning and Development Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Special Assistant for Home Affairs Babar Khan Yousafzai, along with members of civil society and academia.

Addressing the gathering as chief guest, Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi stated that the "Battle of Truth" reflects national unity, awareness, and efforts to promote positive thinking among the younger generation.

He said the Pakistan Armed Forces exposed



the true face of India by defeating the "eternal enemy" during the operation, urging that the patriotic people of Balochistan stand shoulder to shoulder with the country's security forces. He emphasized that the youth of Balochistan are the bright future of the

country and must be provided opportunities in education, research, and positive activities so they can contribute effectively to national development.

Special Assistant Babar Khan Yousafzai stated that the government is utilizing all available resources to ensure peace, stability, and development in Balochistan.

DC Habib Ahmed Bangalzai Pays Tribute to Pakistan Armed Forces on "Battle of Truth" Anniversary

CHAMAN: Deputy Commissioner Habib Ahmed Bangalzai paid rich tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces on the completion of one year of the successful "Battle of Truth" and Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos.

In his statement, he said that under the leadership of Field Marshal Asim Mumin, the remarkable success of the operation reflects the unmatched courage, bravery, and professional excellence of the armed forces.

He stated that Pakistan's success in Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos has been acknowledged at the international level, which not only enhanced the country's prestige but



also strengthened public trust, love, and admiration for the armed forces.

The Deputy Commissioner said that during the "Battle of Truth," the Pakistan Army gave a decisive response to the enemy that would be remembered for generations. He added that the armed forces have

proven their capability to respond effectively to any form of aggression.

He emphasized that Pakistan's defense is invincible and the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its armed forces. He highlighted that the Pakistan Army has always played a vital

Chief Secretary Balochistan Meets ADB Country Director to Discuss Major Development Projects

QUETTA: Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan held an important meeting with Xiaojin Emma Fan, Country Director of the Asian Development Bank, to discuss key development projects in Balochistan, including agriculture, irrigation, information technology, schools, and the Kachhi Canal project.

The meeting focused on strengthening economic development and improving infrastructure across the province.

Detailed discussions were held on agricultural growth, modernization of irrigation systems, promotion of information technology, the Kachhi Canal Project, Washuk Dam expansion plans, and other important initiatives.

Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan stated that for a drought-prone province like Balochistan, improvements in agriculture and



water resources are essential for sustainable economic growth.

He requested technical and financial support from the Asian Development Bank for the rehabilitation of agricultural infrastructure and the introduction of modern technologies.

Special attention was given to the Kachhi Canal Project, which is expected to transform the lives of farmers in the province. Officials noted that Phase-II of the project would help irrigate hundreds of thousands of acres of land, significantly increasing agri-

cultural production.

The meeting also discussed expansion plans for the Washuk Dam, aimed at reducing flood risks and increasing water storage capacity to improve water supply in several districts. In the IT sector, both sides emphasized the development of digital infrastructure and skill-building programs for youth to enhance employment opportunities and technological advancement in the province.

The ADB Country Director appreciated the efforts of the provincial government and assured

Jhalawan Summer Festival Promotes Education, Technology and Sports Activities

KHUZZAR: The ongoing Jhalawan Summer Festival in Khuzdar continues to feature a range of educational, training, and sports activities aimed at engaging youth in constructive and skill-based events.

The festival includes competitions and sessions in artificial intelligence (AI), volleyball, Hifz and Qirat, Naat recitation, and speech contests.

Senior officials including Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razaq Sasoli, Chief Officer Municipal Committee Salah Jamot, District Education Officer Arvid Hussain, and Zahir Karim visited various event venues to review arrangements.



At Divisional Public School Khuzdar, a

special lecture on artificial intelligence was arranged for female students.

Professor Daud Baloch delivered a detailed lecture on modern technology, the use of AI, and its future role in society.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razaq Sasoli said that the core objective of the festival is to familiarize the

younger generation, especially girls, with modern knowledge and technology.

He emphasized that acquiring skills in emerging fields like AI is essential in today's rapidly changing world, and the district administration is taking all possible steps to promote modern education in schools and colleges.

At Government Girls School Khuzdar,

Parliamentary Secretary Highlights Education Vision During Visit to BEF Office in Quetta

QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary for Population Welfare Prince Agha Umar Ahmedzai said that Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti's education-friendly vision reflects the province's sustainable development goals.

He made these remarks during his visit to the office of the Balochistan Education Endowment Fund, where he stressed that the provincial government will continue to strongly support and encourage talented and deserving students across Balochistan.

He noted that BEF is a key welfare institution providing equal scholarship opportunities to top-performing students, children of martyrs, transgender individuals,

and members of minority communities, ensuring inclusivity and equal access to education.

Parliamentary Secretary further said that education has always remained a top priority of the provincial government, and urged students to fully benefit from available scholarship programs to secure a brighter future.

He also appreciated the professional leadership of BEF CEO Khalid Mandai, and expressed confidence that the institution will continue to perform effectively and

expand its services.

At the end of the visit, CEO Khalid Mandai thanked the Parliamentary Secretary as a token of appreciation.

DC Reviews Construction of Shelterless Government School Under BSDI

USTA MUHAMMAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ramzan Palal, accompanied by SDO B&R Kshiq Ali Bohar, visited the construction site of the shelterless Government Boys Primary School Khan Muhammad Jamal in Goh Janan Jamal under the Balochistan Special Development Initiative.

During the visit, Deputy Commissioner conducted a detailed inspection of the ongoing development work. Concerned officials briefed him on the project's progress, construction quality, available facilities, and various phases of completion.

Inspecting the site, Muhammad Ramzan Palal directed the relevant officers and contractor to give special attention to both quality and pace of construction to ensure timely completion of the important educational project.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that education is the foundation of any progressive soci-



ety and that the Government of Balochistan is prioritizing the provision of educational facilities in remote and underdeveloped areas of the province.

He stated that under the vision of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and Provincial Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development Sardar Faisal Khan Jamal, the construction of modern and quality educational institutions is essential in areas where children face difficulties accessing basic facilities.

The Deputy Commissioner further noted that development projects under the BSDI initiative will not only improve access to basic

services but also strengthen the education system, contribute to a better future for children, and help increase literacy rates.

He reaffirmed the district administration's commitment to continuously monitor all development projects to ensure their timely and quality completion so that the public can benefit from them as soon as possible.

Usta Muhammad Kshiq Ali Bohar, SDO of Goh Janan Jamal, Government Boys Primary School construction, education

Deputy Commissioner Conducts Surprise Visit to Government School, Orders Immediate Improvements

KOHLU: Deputy Commissioner Azeem Jan Domki paid a surprise visit to Government Boys Middle School Niaz Shahija in Kohlu, where he reviewed academic activities, teachers' attendance, cleanliness, and the availability of basic facilities.

During the visit, attendance of 215 students was recorded, which the Deputy Com-

missioner appreciated.

However, the inspection also revealed a shortage of teaching staff and the absence of certain basic facilities.

Taking immediate notice of the issues, Azeem Jan Domki ordered

the on-the-spot appointment of three addi-

tional teachers, increasing the total number of teachers at the school to seven.

He directed the concerned authorities to ensure that the newly appointed teachers assume their duties immediately to further improve the teaching process.

TENDER NOTICE section containing details for the Health Department, Government of Balochistan, regarding procurement of printing and supply of stationery. Includes a table with columns for S.No., Class of Object, Bid Security, and ECost.

Salt firm transitions to hybrid solar-battery system

NEWS DESK: In a move towards industrial energy self-reliance, Pakistan's HubSalt has signed a first-of-its-kind agreement with Chinese firm Livoltec to install a hybrid solar and battery storage system.

The agreement was signed in Karachi by Hub Salt CEO Ismail Sattar and Livoltec's Asia-Pacific Director Max Ma.

Under the agreement, the project will be executed on an Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) basis, with responsibility assigned to Optimizen, which will work in collaboration with its Chinese technology partner Livoltec.

The project involves installation of a 1.44-megawatt solar photovoltaic (PV) system integrated with a 2.35MWh-hour battery energy storage system (BESS).

The initiative will significantly reduce the company's reliance on imported diesel.

Speaking on the occasion, Ismail Sattar termed the project a transformative development that would serve as a model for the local industrial sector.



He said that the integration of advanced renewable technologies would not only improve operational efficiency but also set a benchmark for promoting green energy in Pakistan's industrial landscape.

He added that the project is part of the company's long-term strategy to contribute to sustainable industrial growth and national energy goals.

Sattar noted that the company previously relied on diesel generators for its operations but is now transitioning to a modern hybrid energy system.

He said the project would enable annual savings of around 360,000 litres of diesel, reducing import costs and easing pressure on foreign exchange reserves.

From an environmental perspective, the project is also significant, as it will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 2,000 tonnes annually, equivalent to planting around 90,000 trees.

Sattar added that the initiative would also allow HubSalt to participate in global carbon markets, where carbon credits can be earned under international standards such as Verra and Gold Standard.

The hybrid system has been designed to maximise the use of renewable energy, improve efficiency, and ensure uninterrupted power supply.

Livoltec's Asia-Pacific Director Max Ma and Optimizen's CEO also highlighted the importance of the green energy project, reaffirming their commitment to completing it ahead of schedule.

They expressed confidence that the collaboration would further strengthen Livoltec's presence in Pakistan and showcase its expertise in executing large-scale projects in partnership with Optimizen.

Power consumers to get Rs1.75 per unit relief over next 3 months

NEWS DESK: Electricity consumers across the country are expected to receive an unusual relief of Rs1.75 per unit over the next three months (June to August), due to Rs64 billion in savings mainly on account of lower capacity charges paid to power producers during the first quarter (January-March 2026) of the current year, it emerged on Wednesday.

Under the annual tariff rebasing mechanism, the government revised tariff-setting to a calendar-year basis, with effect from January 1, 2026, from the historic practice of fiscal-year adjustments.

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has called a public hearing on May 19 at the request of former Wapda distribution companies (Discos), which have sought a Rs63.94 billion refund to consumers under the quarterly tariff adjustment (QTA) mechanism. The refund is estimated to result in a negative QTA of about Rs1.75 per unit for three billing months.

Consumers are currently paying about 42 paisa per unit in positive QTA on account of higher costs of Rs10.8 billion for the fourth quarter (October-December 2025), which expires by the end of next month.

This will be replaced by a negative QTA for the following three months, resulting in a net reduction of about Rs2.15 per unit. This impact may be partially diluted by higher monthly fuel cost adjustments due to expensive fuel imports.

It may be noted that consumers are currently paying about 42 paisa per unit in positive QTA on account of higher costs of Rs10.8 billion for the fourth quarter (October-December 2025), which expires by the end of next month.

That would be replaced by a negative QTA for the following three months, resulting in a net reduction of about Rs2.15 per unit. This may be diluted partially in the case of higher monthly fuel cost adjustments because of expensive fuel imports.

The Discos sought adjustments on account of capacity charges, transmission charges and market operator fee, the impact of the incremental consumption package announced by the government for industrial and agricultural consumers for three years, and the impact of transmission and distribution losses on monthly fuel costs, as well as variable operations and maintenance charges for the first quarter of the calendar year, i.e., January-March 2026.

The total negative impact of capacity charges comes to about Rs37bn for the said quarter.



The Indian rupee recorded its lowest rate of Rs540 to the dollar this week. India also faces heavy outflows of foreign capital, particularly after the start of the Gulf war.

Experts say 'managed exchange rate' has allowed import of luxury items.

The equity market in Pakistan has also witnessed massive outflows. According to State Bank data, inflows in the equity market during the first 10 months were \$247 million while outflows were \$884m.

Almost the same situation was witnessed with foreign investment

Swelling trade gap hurting balance of payments

NEWS DESK: A sharp increase in trade deficit of as much as \$32 billion threatens the balance of payments as the financial year is coming to a close and final payments are bound to be cleared before June 30, according to industry sources.

However, some financial experts said the "managed exchange rate" has produced negative results as it made the dollar cheaper, allowing importers of luxury items like costly new vehicles to exceed all limits.

The experts said that unlike Pakistan, the Indian rupee sharply fell by 10 per cent over the last 12 months and is still falling.

in domestic bonds as 94 per cent left the country. The prime minister said recently that the cost of imported oil was \$300 million per week before the Gulf war, but it has now gone up to \$800m. Most of the currency experts found it difficult to digest as it showed that the price of oil had shot up by 167 per cent.

The import data show that the import bill of petroleum products in first 10 months of the current financial year FY26 was still less than the same period of last fiscal year. During July-April, the cost of imported petroleum was \$10.45bn against \$11.25bn in the same period of last fiscal year.

The cheaper dollar made the difference as

the import of Completely Built Unit (cars) during the 10 months reached \$317m, compared to \$76m last year.

Similarly the import of completely knock-down units (CKD) during the first 10 months of FY26 reached \$1.37bn, compared to \$780m during the same period of last year.

The rupee traded as high as Rs306 in the interbank market in 2023, but was pulled back to Rs286 in Oct 2023. Since then the rupee hovered between Rs277 to Rs282 in the interbank market.

Since July FY26, the PKR has been appreciating inch by inch against US dollar and now available at below Rs280 per dollar.



Pakistan, US agree to continue trade talks



NEWS DESK: Pakistan and the US have agreed to continue ongoing negotiations on outstanding matters under an Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART), as Washington is asking Islamabad to increase imports to narrow the existing trade imbalance.

The US side acknowledged the potential to further strengthen bilateral trade and reiterated its willingness to work closely with Pakistan to advance the ongoing negotiations.



Both sides agreed that a reciprocal and forward-looking trade framework would contribute to sustainable economic engagement. Pakistan's Commerce Minister Jam Kamal, along with Secretary Commerce Jawad Paul held a virtual meeting with Deputy US Trade Representative (USTR) Rick Switzer to discuss bilateral trade ties, advancing ongoing negotiations, and exploring new avenues of economic cooperation between the two countries.

Deputy USTR Rick Switzer appreciated the constructive approach in the discussions, stating, "We value our engagement with Pakistan and look forward to continued collaboration to advance a balanced and mutually beneficial trade relationship."

Mr Paul noted that Pakistan has already held constructive and positive engagements on ART with only a limited number of areas under discussion. He emphasised that Pakistan's remain closely engaged with their US counterparts to address outstanding matters constructively.

the positive via statement appreciating Trump's leadership and the timely de-escalation efforts. The endorsement further cemented investor confidence, adding fuel to the ongoing rally, the brokerage noted.

Falling oil prices and de-escalation hopes lift investor sentiment. Meanwhile, a sharp decline in international oil prices provided a strong tailwind to the market, alleviating concerns over external account pressures and inflationary risks.

The drop in crude acted as a catalyst in cyclical plays, amplifying buying interest and sustaining the upward trajectory. Index heavyweights, including United Bank, Lucky Cement, Fauji Fertiliser

Company, Pakistan Petroleum, Oil and Gas Development Company, and Engro Holdings, led the advance, contributing 2,920 points to the benchmark. The endorsement further cemented investor confidence, adding fuel to the ongoing rally, the brokerage noted.

Bulls stage 6,962-point recovery rally

NEWS DESK: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) staged a sharp recovery on Wednesday as easing geopolitical tensions and a steep fall in global oil prices rekindled investor confidence.

The benchmark KSE-100 index surged to an intraday high of 171,746 points before closing at 171,704.75, up 6,962.28 points or 4.23 per cent, with broad-based buying seen across key sectors.

Topline Securities Ltd said sentiment turned decisively positive after indications of progress in potential US-Iran negotiations, easing concerns over tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy route.

Company, Pakistan Petroleum, Oil and Gas Development Company, and Engro Holdings, led the advance, contributing 2,920 points to the benchmark.

Ali Najib, Deputy Head of Trading at Arif Habib Ltd, noted that the rally was driven by improved investor sentiment amid encouraging geopolitical developments and expectations of stabilisation in global energy markets.

Investor participation turned bullish sharply as the total trading volume surged 165.25pc to 1.2 billion shares, with the traded value shoot up 176.5pc to Rs63bn.

Analysts expect sentiment to remain broadly positive in the near term, supported by ongoing diplomatic engagement between the United States and Iran. Reports of a possible second round of talks, potentially involving regional stakeholders, are being closely monitored by investors.

However, market participants remain cautious, noting that the outlook is highly sensitive to geopolitical headlines. Any adverse developments could quickly alter sentiment, while continued progress on de-escalation may sustain the rally.

For now, easing tensions and softer oil prices have provided the impetus for a strong rebound, placing the market on a firm footing after recent volatility.

Arsenal on cusp of history after reaching Champions League final

NEWS DESK: Mikel Arteta has urged Arsenal to use the "energy and belief" generated by reaching the Champions League final for the first time in 20 years as fuel to complete an historic double.

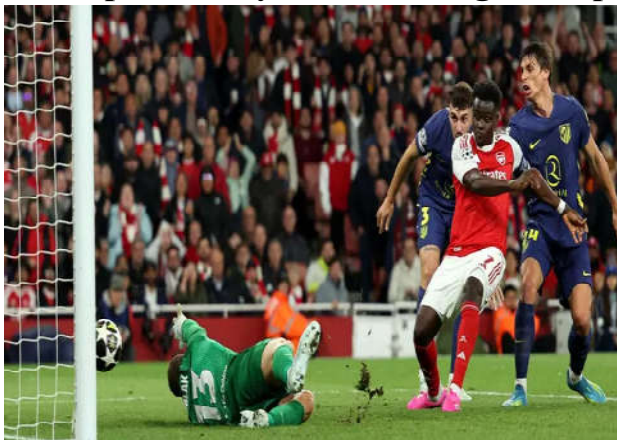
Even by his frenetic standards, Arteta was a blur of energy as the Gunners boss embarked on a jubilant lap of honour with his players after Tuesday's 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid in a cagey semi-final second leg at the Emirates Stadium.

Bukayo Saka's close-range finish in the first half sealed a 2-1 aggregate victory that sent Arsenal back into the Champions League final for the first time since their only previous appearance ended in defeat against Barcelona in 2006.

Saka's return from injury could not have come at a better time for Arsenal. He flourished in the 3-0 win over Fulham at the weekend and was alert to poke home a rebound in the 44th minute after Jan Oblak parried Leandro Trossard's shot at his feet.

"It was a high-pressure game. It meant a lot to both sides. We managed it well," Saka said. "Sometimes it bounces for you and sometimes it doesn't but it fell for me and we're in the final now."

The north London club are now four games



from immortality, with three wins from their remaining Premier League matches against West Ham United, Burnley and Crystal Palace guaranteeing a first English title since 2004.

After the title fight with Manchester City is decided, Arteta's side will travel to Budapest on May 30 as they chase a maiden Champions League crown.

Arteta was ecstatic during the wild post-match celebrations and, on the cusp of history, he challenged his players to use the feeling to carry them to the finish line in both competitions.

"It's great. Everybody can feel a shift in energy, in belief, in everything," he said. "Let's use it in the right way and understand that the margins and the difficulty of

what we are trying to achieve are huge, but that we have the ability and the conviction to do it."

"I'm really going to enjoy this moment now. But the high is not too high and the low is not too low. My job is to be quite stable. We have an incredible game against West Ham, a really tough

one, and we're going to have four days to do that." An incredible night.

Over two decades have passed since Arsene Wenger's "Invincibles" reigned supreme with their unbeaten title-winning campaign in 2004.

Wenger greatly lost his way after losing to Barca in the Champions League final, but Arteta finally appears to

have recaptured the spirit of that iconic team. The Spaniard has laboured for over six years to create the perfect alchemy between players and fans, a bond that has come dangerously close to breaking during a trophy drought dating back to the 2020 FA Cup victory.

Arteta has hit on the perfect ingredients this season, leaving Arsenal on the brink of erasing the pain of three successive runners-up finishes in the Premier League.

"It was an incredible night. We made history again together and I cannot be happier and prouder for everybody that's involved in this football club," Arteta said.

That have to make these kind of performances. I didn't really imagine it because we weren't in Europe at the beginning. This is a big achievement," he said. "We have been building little by little. We believed in what we wanted to do. Now we have to maintain it."

Meanwhile, it will be a fifth straight year without silverware for Diego Simeone's side, inevitably raising questions over the Argentine coach's future.

Asked if he had the strength to continue after Tuesday's defeat, Simeone's answer was an unusual one.

"Not now, definitely not now," Simeone said, leaving doubts over his intentions this summer.

There have been similar queries put to Simeone over the years, 14-and-a-half of them, since he took over at the helm of the Rojiblanco. Usually they have surfaced in moments like these, painful knockouts, that Atletico have suffered repeatedly. None hurt more than the two final defeats by rivals Real Madrid in 2014 and 2016. The seasons since have largely been frustrating, despite landing La Liga in 2021, even though the task of competing with Spain's two giants in Barcelona and Real Madrid is a difficult one.

Australia to tour Pakistan for 3-match ODI series beginning on May 30

NEWS DESK: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Thursday that the Australia men's cricket team will tour the country for a three-match one-day international (ODI) series.

In a press release, the cricket board said that the visitors would arrive in Islamabad on

May 23 and take on the Green Shirts in the first ODI scheduled at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on May 30.

The second and third ODIs of the series will be played at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on June 2 and 4, respectively, it said. "All three ODIs are scheduled to begin

at 4:30pm local time, with the toss taking place at 4pm," the press release said.

It went on to say that the upcoming bilateral ODI series would be Australia's first in Pakistan since 2022. It also highlighted that Australia last visited Pakistan earlier this year to participate in a three-

match T20I series, which the hosts won 3-0 at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

It further said that Australia also featured in ICC Champions Trophy 2025 matches in Pakistan, including a five-wicket win against England at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on February 22.



Badminton looks to future

NEWS DESK: Synthetic shuttlecocks, shorter games and a new generation of stars are all part of the "evolution" of badminton, a top official told AFP, saying the sport can't afford to sit still.

Traditionalists hit out after the Badminton World Federation said that from January 2027 it will adjust the scoring system, partly with an eye on the next generation of fans.

Currently, matches are the best of three games, with the winner of each the first to 21 points. That will change to the first to 15.

Also last month, the BWF said it will trial synthetic shuttlecocks at lower-grade tournaments with a view to potentially using them at elite level.

Days later -- in an unrelated move -- double Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen retired aged 32, leaving a hole at the top of the men's game.

BWF secretary general Thomas Lund told AFP that badminton was well placed to thrive as it attempts to build on the immense popularity it already enjoys in Asia.



Members overwhelmingly approved the 15-point games, but Lund conceded: "Of course there are some who have doubts about what that will mean for the game."

"I would say most of the traditionalists or sceptical voices in our community are -- as I see it -- the ones who are afraid that the sport will change. I would say this is rather seen as a tweak to the sporting aspects and the scoring system and the game... this is very much in line with how we see the

game being played today, the DNA, how the game will evolve," Lund added.

It was also about "the welfare of players in terms of recovery" and making it more appealing to fans and broadcasters, he said.

Part of any sport's future is having big stars and badminton lost one in Lund's fellow Dane Axelsen. Spain's 2016 Olympic champion Carolina Marin also left the sport in March at the same age after a long struggle with a knee injury. Before them, the ri-

valry between China's Lin Dan and Lee Chong Wei of Malaysia captivated and even transcended the sport until 2018. Lund dismissed concerns that Axelsen's retirement and the lack of a rivalry akin to the Lin-Lee storyline hurts badminton.

"I've heard this for 40 years," he said. "The sport that we sometimes compare ourselves with is tennis, and everybody was afraid of what will happen when (Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal) disappeared.

Masood expresses confidence in bowling as Pakistan set to face Bangladesh in first Test tomorrow

NEWS DESK: Pakistan Test captain Shan Masood has expressed confidence in the bowling attack as the national side prepares to face Bangladesh in the first Test of the two-match series in Mirpur on Friday.

The Green Shirts are visiting Bangladesh for a Test series after being whitewashed on home soil by the Bengal Tigers in August 2024. The visitors had won the two-match series by 10 wickets and six wickets respectively in Rawalpindi.

Addressing the press conference on Thursday, Masood said, "We are fully focused on this series and the challenge of playing Bangladesh in their own conditions."

He also put the weight on the home side's "quality in all departments".

Masood said that the team is looking forward to "testing" itself against its hosts. "We have selected a well-balanced squad that can perform in different conditions. The players have experience of playing in seam-friendly as well as spin-

friendly environments, so we are confident about the options available to us," he said.

"In Test cricket, taking 20 wickets remains the key to success." "We have confidence in our bowling attack and the team combination. If we perform well collectively in batting, bowling and fielding, we can achieve good results in this series," he added.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto insisted his side must post big first-innings totals to give their potent pace attack the platform to take 20 wickets. "The important

thing is scoring runs. If we score 400 in 80 overs, no problem. If someone takes 120 overs, I also have no problem," Shanto said.

Shanto believed his fast bowlers hold a slight edge over Pakistan's attack.

Bangladesh have bolstered their batting with the inclusion of attacking opener Tanvir Hasan Tammim, while Tasnim Ahmed returns from injury to strengthen an already experienced pace unit alongside the exciting Nahid Rana.

Pakistan will take confidence from Babar Azam's rich run of form in the recent HBL Cricket Super League 2026.

However, there was uncertainty in Pakistan's camp on Thursday after Babar underwent a scan following the team's practice session, with his fitness for the series yet to be confirmed.

1st Test, Pakistan vs Bangladesh, May 8 to 12, Mirpur, 5am.

2nd Test, Pakistan vs Bangladesh, May 16 to 20, Sylhet, 9am.

Shan Masood (captain), Abdullah Fazal, Anam Butt, Azan Awaiz, Babar Azam, Hasan Ali, Imran-ul-Haq, Khuram Shahzad, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan (wicket-keeper), Muhammad Ghazi Ghori (wicket-keeper).



Shaheen backs head coach Sarfraz Ahmed ahead of Bangladesh Tests

NEWS DESK: Pakistan pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi has put his support behind the newly-appointed head coach Sarfraz Ahmed ahead of his first assignment; a two-match Test series against Bangladesh.

Sarfraz was handed the role last month after it was left vacant by former head coach Azhar Mahmood, whose contract with the Pakistan Cricket Board ended in March.

Sarfraz's appointment had raised eyebrows due to the former skipper's lack of experience as coach at the senior level.

He has worked with the Pakistan Shaheens -- the country's developmental side -- and the national Under-19 team as mentor. He also announced retirement from international cricket in March.

Friday will mark Sarfraz's debut as head coach as Pakistan take on Bangladesh in the first Test. The second game will start May 16.

"He played with us when he was captain, when we played our first games," Shaheen told reporters on Wednesday. "So those memories are still in our minds and he knows very well how to use all the players and how to use all conditions."

"So I think for Pakistan well collectively in batting, bowling and fielding, we can achieve good results in this series," he added.

"Sarfraz's staff also features former Pakistan players Asad Shafiq and Umar Gul. Shaheen said an all-Pakistan coaching unit was helpful for the players."

"Having a coaching staff with all Pakistani former players removes the language barrier among the team," noted the left-arm.

"That improves communication between the coaches and the players, which I feel is much easier. You understand what the player and the team wants."

The Bangladesh games will be Pakistan's first Test series since October, when they played

against South Africa at home, drawing the two-match series 1-1. It was also Pakistan's first series of the World Test Championship 2025-27 cycle.

The period in between has been heavily dominated by white-ball cricket.

"It's not easy actually," Shaheen said about playing Tests after a long gap. "Our last Test series was against South Africa in Pakistan -- that was a long time ago."

However, the 26-year-old added that himself and the other Pakistani pacers managed their respective workloads on the sidelines of their Pakistan Super League campaign.

"Even in the PSL, as soon as matches would finish, we used to do extra bowling on the side wickets," he said.

"Because we were preparing that if we suddenly come into Test cricket, how to manage our bowling load. And in the four-five days we got (before

the series), we tried to bowl 20-25 overs on those days so that we could get used to Test cricket."

Pictures coming in from the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka on Wednesday suggested Bangladesh, known for their spin-friendly conditions, are preparing pitches conducive for fast-bowling as they look to unleash their increasingly exciting pace sensation Nahid Rana alongside Taskin Ahmed and Shoriful Islam.

But Pakistan's self-and the other Pakistani pacers managed their respective workloads on the sidelines of their Pakistan Super League campaign.

Test mainstays Sajid Khan and Noman Ali will carry out the spin duties.

"Abbas bhai and Khuram have come -- they are seamers, so when there are green tracks, your seamers become very effective," Shaheen said. "Such first Test series can help you a lot."

PAF displayed its unmatched capability, resilience, dominance in Marka-e-Haq, says air chief

NEWS DESK: Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zahoor Ahmad Baber Sidhu on Thursday said that Pakistan Air Force (PAF) displayed its capability, resilience, and dominance in Marka-e-Haq, upholding the glorious legacy being second to none, Radio Pakistan reported.

The term "Marka-e-Haq" refers to the 2025 conflict with India, which began with the April 22 Pahalgaon attack and concluded with a ceasefire on May 10 following Operation Banyanum Marsoos.

Addressing a ceremony on the occasion of the completion of one year of Marka-e-Haq at Air Headquarters in Islamabad, the air chief marshal said Pakistan's resounding success was the outcome of a unified approach by all elements of the national power and the blessings of God Almighty.

He mentioned that PAF conducted a full-spectrum multi-domain operation for the first time in the history of air warfare. He said the world was stunned to witness this superb execution of the PAF operation that was excellently choreographed and flawlessly executed, adding that the PAF attacked many high-value and high-visibility targets.

The air chief said that Pakistan's cyber "Shahens" have destroyed the enemy's cyber security and, while delivering a humiliating defeat to the Indian Air Force (IAF), brought down some of the world's top fighter jets, state broadcaster PTV reported.

He said we disrupted the enemy's power and transport systems, crippled its critical operational installations, shot down modern Rafale jets, and resounding success was the outcome of a unified approach by all elements of the national power and the blessings of God Almighty.

He mentioned that PAF conducted a full-spectrum multi-domain operation for the first time in the history of air warfare. He said the world was stunned to



single formidable force package. Sidhu said PAF could have gone further, but "we exercised responsibility and well-calibrated force application."

Looking ahead, the air chief said we remain focused on preparing hard for future challenges. He mentioned that a range of capabilities at the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park are expanding at an unprecedented pace. He said a host of indigenous projects are in the pipeline and they are vigorously being pursued.

He added that the exemplary leadership of the Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir played an important role in securing victory, and that the country's leadership

made it possible to achieve these successes.

He concluded that the PAF will always live up to the expectations of the brave and resilient people of Pakistan, assuring that the PAF will remain a symbol of pride for the nation.

In a swift military response, Pakistan's armed forces shot down Indian warplanes, including three Rafale jets. The confrontation intensified again in the early hours of May 10, 2025, when India targeted several Pakistani airbases with missile strikes. In retaliation, Pakistan launched Operation Banyanum Marsoos, damaging Indian military installations, including missile storage sites, airbases, and other strategic targets.

On May 10, 2025, US President Donald Trump announced that a ceasefire had been reached following intense overnight diplomatic efforts. Minutes later, the agreement was confirmed separately by Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and the Indian foreign secretary.

4 children killed, 20 people injured as roof of classroom collapses in Dera Ghazi Khan school

NEWS DESK: At least four children were killed and 20 people were injured after the roof of a classroom at a private school in Punjab's Dera Ghazi Khan collapsed on Thursday.

The preliminary report of the incident released by the district administration confirmed the number of casualties. The injured include 16 students, two teachers and as many as 10 labourers, according to the report, which is available with Dawn.

It said the incident was reported around noon, following which rescue personnel and ambulances were sent to the site. Initial responders reached the site "in four minutes", it added. Rescue 1122

spokesperson Farooq Ahmad also told Dawn that rescue and district administration officials, along with local residents, participated in the rescue operation to pull out the students and teachers from under the rubble.

Prior to the release of the report, CEO Gill had assured that the incident would be investigated and action would be taken against the school administration for "allegedly compromising students' safety by carrying out construction work during school hours."

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has also taken notice of the incident and sought a report from the authorities concerned.



The case was heard

IHC adjourns £190m case hearing on Safdar's request, sets May 20

NEWS DESK: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday adjourned the hearing of the main appeal against the conviction in the £190 million corruption case until May 20, accepting a request by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan's lawyer Barrister Salman Safdar.

In January last year, an Islamabad accountability court sentenced Imran to 14 years and Bushra Bibi to seven years in prison on charges filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The IHC is currently hearing appeals seeking suspension of these sentences.

Safdar, on Wednesday, filed a miscellaneous petition in the IHC seeking the adjournment and also sought permission to meet his client to obtain instructions and have the power of attorney signed. Khan's counsel stated that their involvement had thus far been limited to handling applications for the suspension of sentences, with no formal engagement in the main appeals, as the necessary Powers of Attorney had not been signed by their clients.

linked to the case in the media. In response, counsel Shouh Shabeen said the matter should be argued in court rather than in public discourse.

NAB opposed the adjournment request; however, the court granted a final deadline for concluding arguments. The hearing was subsequently adjourned until May 20.

Chief Justice Durrani, in the miscellaneous application, stated that the filing of the appeal and raised concerns over repeated discussions

court's orders were not being implemented and that meetings with the PTI founder and Bushra Bibi had not taken place as scheduled since the verdict.

The chief justice, after hearing the arguments, rose from the bench and went to chambers with the other judge, expressing hope that the case would progress at the next hearing.

On Monday, the IHC rejected the petitions of Imran and Bushra Bibi seeking the suspension of their sentences in the £190 million



corruption case, observing that their main appeals were already fixed for hearing. Imran and Bushra Bibi had requested that their suspension of sentence pleas be heard before the main appeals. Both had filed their suspension of sentence applications in March 2025.

In its judgment, the court noted that the request for suspension of sentence was pressed because the main appeal was already fixed for hearing. The court held that the merits of the case could not be examined at the stage of suspension of sentence.

Imran and Bushra Bibi remain incarcerated in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail.

They were sentenced on December 20, 2025, to 17 years in prison in the Toshakhana-II case, which pertains to allegations that the couple unlawfully retained a Bulgari jewellery set gifted by the Saudi crown prince during an official visit to Saudi Arabia.

Imran has been in custody since August 2023, serving a sentence in a £190 million corruption case.

The case was heard

Cambridge to retake 'prematurely shared' AS-level mathematics exam on June 9

NEWS DESK: Cambridge International Education (CIE) on Thursday cancelled the "prematurely shared" mathematics exam, announcing that it will conduct a new version of the exam for affected regions on June 9.

On April 30, CIE confirmed that its AS-level mathematics paper was "shared prematurely" against its regulations.

It said that the exam paper was for the Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Pakistan and South Asia regions.

CIE, in a statement, said that "Cambridge's senior assessment experts have decided that a new version of the Mathematics (9709/12) exam paper will be set by all candidates in the affected regions."

CIE noted that the previous exam paper could not be used to award final exam results and "will not be used to generate results through calculated assessment."

The ruling comes in the short order, noted that the provision introduced through the Finance Act 2022 had been challenged before multiple high courts across the country on constitutional grounds.

The ruling comes after conflicting decisions from across the country. The Peshawar High Court (PHC) and the Balochistan High Court had already declared the provision unconstitutional and struck it down, while the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had partially read it down and declared subsection (2) as unconstitutional.

A Lahore High Court (LHC) decision upholding the provision was later reversed by a division bench, while the Sindh High Court (SHC) had dismissed similar petitions.



in us to deliver fair results at the end of the exam process," CIE said.

It further said that Cambridge International was conducting an "active investigation" into the matter.

"We are working closely with relevant enforcement agencies and other partners to identify those responsible," the statement said.

Cambridge imposes strict sanctions on anyone found to have shared or misused confidential exam materials, including permanent disqualification from Cambridge qualifications and exams, said the statement.

The examination body added that they "regularly" receive false news of reports of paper leaks; however, it added that "the majority of them are false."

The examination board elaborated that it routinely monitored "social media and other online channels for posts offering to share or sell question papers."

It added that CIE worked with social media platforms to "identify and remove such content."

FCC dismisses FBR appeals, declares Section 7E unconstitutional

NEWS DESK: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) on Thursday declared Section 7E of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001, declaring it unconstitutional, struck it down, and dismissed appeals filed by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) seeking its restoration.

The court stated that the provision "shall be deemed not to have been part of the Income Tax Ordinance from day one." It further ruled that all actions taken by FBR under Section 7E are also unlawful. The court noted that Section 7E had imposed tax on certain properties, including plots not under active use.

Under Section 7E of the Income Tax Ordinance, any immovable property owned by a taxpayer—other than the first property—is treated as if it generated rental income if it was

not rented out. This applied to properties that were self-occupied, used for business, or agricultural land owned by the taxpayer.

The law assumed a national rental income equal to 20% of the property's FBR-assessed value. This deemed income was then taxed at 5%, which effectively amounted to an annual tax of about 1% of the property's FBR (capital) value.

After hearing arguments, the court held, "We are persuaded to hold that Section 7E of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001, is ultra vires the Constitution, and is accordingly struck down, being void ab initio." The judgment of the FCC is final and is not subject to appeal.

The court also declared that the provision was later reversed by a division bench, while the Sindh High Court (SHC) had dismissed similar petitions.