



**Musadik vows weekly plantation drives in Isb after March 31**



**Aleem Khan, Iranian envoy discuss regional situation, bilateral cooperation**



**Hanif Abbasi meets newly appointed IG Railways Police**

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Thursday 01 May 2025 Zilqad 03, 1446 A.H VOI No: 05 Issue No. 128 Pages 4 Rs.10

## PM Shehbaz highlights Pakistan's role in Middle East de-escalation in meeting with Chinese envoy

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif highlighted Pakistan's constructive role in promoting de-escalation and regional stability while discussing the situation in the Middle East with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zedong on Thursday. On Monday, Pakistan took centre stage in a coordinated diplomatic push alongside Turkey and Egypt for de-escalation, as the trio appeared instrumental in securing a five-day pause of US plans to strike Iranian energy and power infrastructure, officials said, describing the effort as going beyond routine crisis management.

A press release by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said that the Chinese ambassador called on the premier at the PM House

today. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi, and the foreign secretary were also present, it said.

PM Shehbaz appreciated China's "steady-fast economic support" and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to advancing CPEC 2.0, "with a focus on agriculture, industrial cooperation, and priority infrastructure projects", the PMO statement said.

He also congratulated the Chinese leadership on the successful conclusion of the "Two Sessions" in Beijing and thanked President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi for their warm Pakistan Day greetings.



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Jiang Zedong calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Israel strikes Iran as Trump says Tehran wants deal to end war

PEAK POINT



WASHINGTON: Israel launched strikes across Iran on Thursday, hours after US President Donald Trump said Tehran wanted a deal to end the nearly four-week war despite its top diplomat rejecting any talks with Washington.

The conflict has mushroomed to draw in nations around the Middle East, sending energy markets into a tailspin and threatening to torpedo the global economy. Iran, under near-daily bombardment since a joint US-Israeli attack started the war on February 28, was hit early on Thursday by what the Israeli army said was "a wide-scale wave of strikes targeting infrastructure", including in the central city of Isfahan.

In turn, an Iranian missile attack activated sirens across central Israel, including Tel Aviv and parts of Jerusalem, on Thursday morning, according to the Israeli military, the first launches it identified from Iran in more than 14 hours. Trump, whose daily statements have swung wildly from threatening to conciliatory, said talks to end the war were ongoing with Iran, but that officials in Tehran were covering them up out of fear.

## Temporary pause in Operation Ghazab lil-Haq has concluded, FO says

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Thursday said that the temporary pause in Operation Ghazab lil-Haq against the Afghan Taliban had concluded and the operation would continue "until its objectives are achieved". FO Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi made the remarks while answering questions during his weekly press briefing regarding whether the pause had been extended. Operation Ghazab lil-Haq was launched on the night of Feb 26 following cross-border firing by the Afghan Taliban. "Operation Ghazab Lil-Haq is ongoing. It is a precise, target-



ed operation, military campaign directed against terrorist leadership and their support and command, infrastructure, logistics, logistic networks and facilitators and abettors of these terrorist acts within the Taliban regime and in the Taliban controlled area," he said. Andrabi said that a temporary pause was observed in "deference to Eidul Fitr celebrations and in response to requests from our brotherly Islamic countries". "The pause has concluded [on] midnight between, I think, March 23 and 24. So, operations under Operation Ghazab Lil-Haq continue now until the objectives are achieved, and until the Afghan Taliban regime reviews its misplaced priority of supporting terror infrastructures and terror proxies

## Government school blown up in Bannu

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Unidentified armed men destroyed a government school using explosive materials in Bannu district, police informed on Thursday. The incident took place in village Ghora in Baka Khel area, where unknown militants planted explosives at Government Primary School Noor Jan Baka Khel. The explosives detonated, destroying the school building. Police reached the scene immediately after receiving the report and a search operation has been launched by police and security forces in the surrounding area.

## Repatriation of unlawful Afghanis resumes via Torkham

PEAK POINT

KHYBER: Suspended for 31 days due to Pak-Afghan war, deportation of illegal Afghan citizens began on Thursday via Torkham border, border officials said. They said that fifty Afghan nationals detained by the security authorities while residing unlawfully in Pakistan were sent back to Afghanistan after completing all necessary formalities in the holding camp. Earlier, all relevant departments had been directed to ensure full preparedness and submit their "ready status" reports by Thursday 9:00 a.m.

## Info minister assails PTI, says attempt at disrespecting country's dignity 'unacceptable'

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Thursday assailed the PTI, stating the party's "attempts" at disrespecting the country's dignity under the guise of political disagreement were "unacceptable". The comments come a day after Kasim Khan, the son of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan, raised his father's case at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), saying that the former prime minister's treatment by authorities violated international human rights conventions as well as commitments made under the GSP+ framework.

Addressing a press conference on Thursday, the minister held that "while it was every political party's



right to engage in criticism, the country's dignity should not be put at stake".

He noted that an "unfortunate development" was seen in Geneva a day earlier, referring to Kasim's speech at the UNHRC.

"No political leader is bigger than Pakistan," Tarar said, assailing the PTI for not putting "national interest first".

"sabotage" the country's affairs before.

He said it was the same party which "wrote letters to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and appealed that Pakistan should not be given a bailout package in 2022".

"They thought their leader was bigger than Pakistan," he said, adding that the party leadership had also attempted to cast doubt over Pakistan's GSP+ status in 2024.

Speaking about the issue of the former premier's sons' visas, the minister said, "We decided that we will welcome the sons of Imran Ahmed Niazi to Pakistan with an open heart, but make use of the National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis (NICOP)".

## At least 217 children have been killed in the US-Israeli war on Iran



PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Thousands of people have been killed across the Middle East in the Iran war, which began when the US and Israel struck Iran on February 28, triggering Iranian attacks on Israel, US bases and Gulf states, while also opening a new front in Lebanon.

Here are the latest death tolls reported, which Reuters has not independently verified. US-based rights group HRANA said on Wednesday that 3,300 people have been killed since the war erupted. It said 1,464 of those were civilians, including at least 217 children. The group says its data comes from field reports, local contacts, medical and emergency sources, civil society networks, open-source materials and official statements.



# SPORTS



## Maryam Nawaz attends simple opening ceremony of HBL PSL 11



**PEAK POINT**  
LAHORE: The 11th edition of the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) commenced with a simple opening ceremony at Gaddafi Stadium on Thursday.

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif arrived at the venue to attend the inaugural event, where she was warmly received by Mohsin Naqvi, Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board.

Upon her arrival, the Chief Minister was introduced to the owners of the franchises partici-

parting in PSL 11. She extended her best wishes to all teams, expressing hope for a competitive and entertaining tournament that would further promote cricket in Pakistan.

Maryam Nawaz was also introduced to the players of the opening match teams, Lahore Qalandars and Hyderabad Kingsmen, and conveyed her encouragement to both sides ahead of the match.

In a highlight moment of the ceremony, legendary former cricketer Wasim Akram brought the PSL 11 trophy onto the field. The

ceremony continued with the playing of Pakistan's national anthem before the start of the opening fixture, adding a patriotic touch to the occasion.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi also expressed his best wishes to all participating teams, emphasising the importance of sportsmanship and unity through cricket. The Chief Minister Punjab and the PCB Chairman later watched together the opening match of the HBL PSL 11 between Qalandars and Kingsmen, signaling strong institutional support for the

league.

The event was attended by several key officials, including Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, provincial ministers Salman Rafique and Faisal Ayub Khokhar, Advisor Ali Dar, as well as senior administrative and cricketing authorities. Among them were the Chief Secretary, PCB Chief Operating Officer Sameer Ahmed, and PSL Chief Executive Officer Salman Naseer, along with other relevant officials.

## Lahore Qalandars crush Hyderabad Kingsmen by 69 runs in PSL 11 opener



F.G REPORT

LAHORE: The 11th edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) got off to a commanding start for defending champions Lahore Qalandars, who secured a comprehensive 69-run victory over debutants Hyderabad Kingsmen in the opening match at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Thursday.

After winning the toss and opting to bat first, Lahore Qalandars posted an imposing total of 199 for 6 in their allotted 20 overs. The innings was anchored by Fakhar Zaman, who led the charge with a fluent 53, setting the tone early for the title holders. Haseebullah Khan added further impetus with an unbeaten 40, while Mohammad Naeem contributed a steady 30 at the top of the order.

Sikandar Raza chipped in with 24 runs, and Parvez Hossain Emon added 14, as the Qalandars maintained a strong scoring rate throughout the innings.

Captain Shaheen Shah Afridi remained unbeaten on 12, providing late acceleration, while Asif Ali and Abdullah Shafique made brief contributions of 6 and 4 respectively.

## Shaheen Afridi backs govt call on Pakistan Super League 11



**PEAK POINT**  
LAHORE: Lahore Qalandars captain Shaheen Shah Afridi said that although the absence of fans will be felt in the PSL, everyone must support the government's decision.

In an exclusive interview with Express Tribune, he said that the team's

preparations for PSL 11 are going well. A training camp was held during Ramadan, which Sikandar Raza also attended. He added that the squad includes several promising young players, and the team is determined to perform at its best.

Shaheen noted that all teams look strong on paper, including

new sides with quality players. He mentioned that Hyderabad and Kingsmen also appear to be a solid team. Lahore Qalandars are confident in their preparations and aim to play excellent cricket.

Shaheen said that Fakhar Zaman has completed nearly ten years with Lahore Qalandars, which is rare. He described Fakhar as the backbone of the team, adding that when he is in form, he can trouble any opposition.

He clarified that Fakhar did not have a serious injury; the medical team simply advised rest after a long gap in ODI cricket.

Shaheen praised Sikandar Raza, saying he has never seen a player from last season still part of the lineup.

how Raza played a Test match for Zimbabwe and then arrived the very next day for a PSL final. His dedication to cricket and the team is exemplary.

Shaheen highlighted the importance of Haris Rauf, calling him a wicket-taking bowler and a fighter. He emphasized that players like Rauf, who contribute in bowling, fielding, and overall performance, are crucial for any team.

Shaheen said that Dasun Shanaka leaving PSL for the IPL did not affect the team combination. He added that Lahore Qalandars have strong players in all departments.

The team retained players from last season still part of the lineup.



LAHORE: Captains of various team pose for a group photo during unveiling of National Women's T20 Trophy, which is beginning today (Friday) here.

## Iran train in Turkey with tight media control ahead of World Cup warm-ups

**PEAK POINT**  
IRAN: Iran's men's team trained in southern Turkey on Wednesday as they prepare for two upcoming friendlies ahead of the World Cup, where the squad is likely to attract heightened attention against the backdrop of the US-Israeli war on Iran.

The team held a training session in Belek, a resort area near the Mediterranean city of Antalya, with tightly restricted media access as officials said they wanted to avoid distractions ahead of the matches described as critical to their World Cup preparations.

Iran's football federation is in discussions with world governing body FIFA about moving its World Cup matches to Mexico from the United States due to concerns over player safety, federation President Mehdi Taj said last week.

Iran's camp has largely sought to keep a low public profile as the team builds towards the World Cup, where they are expected to face intense political and media scrutiny.



In Belek, no interviews with players or coaches were made available, and a team media representative said the squad was focused entirely on their immediate competitive programme.

Iran will play two matches in Antalya, against Nigeria on Friday and Costa Rica on Tuesday. The friendlies were origi-

nally scheduled to take place in Jordan but were moved to Turkey following the outbreak of the Iran war.

Pakistan urges ceasefire, intensifies diplomatic outreach for Middle East peace

The players appeared relaxed during the session in sunny conditions, and staff and players at times chatting and joking. Among those present was forward Mehdi Taremi, who has been in the spotlight in recent days after swapping shirts with an Israeli opponent while playing for his club Olympiacos in Greece.



International Squash Player Muhammad Hamza receives his certificate of First Wazir Khan Ramzan Squash Training Camp.



# CDA, Chinese embassy discuss diplomatic facilitation, rainwater harvesting in federal capital

**PEAK POINT**  
ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Thursday met with Chinese embassy Counsellor Zhao Yang to discuss issues concerning the diplomatic community, bilateral cooperation and a proposed rooftop rainwater harvesting initiative in the federal capital.

The meeting, held at CDA Headquarters, was also attended by Chinese embassy administration

head Sun Mingji and attaché Yao Delong, as well as CDA Board Member Planning and Design Dr Khalid Hafiz, Member Engineering Syed Nafasat Raza and other senior officials.

CDA, Chinese embassy discuss diplomatic facilitation, rainwater harvesting in federal capital

According to a statement, Randhawa assured the Chinese side of the CDA's full cooperation in facilitating the diplomatic community, particularly the Chinese embassy.



During the meeting, the CDA chairman said the authority had taken an important initiative on rooftop rainwater harvesting in Islamabad and suggested that the model could be introduced at embassies

and in residential areas of the Diplomatic Enclave.

He said the measure could help improve groundwater recharge and address water scarcity in the capital.

The Chinese counsellor welcomed the proposal and expressed willingness to take the lead by implementing the initiative at the Chinese embassy, the statement said.

Randhawa said the CDA was ready to provide guidance and facilitation for the project.

The two sides also dis-

cussed cooperation in landscaping and horticulture.

The Chinese counsellor appreciated the CDA's efforts for beautification, landscaping and tree plantation in Islamabad.

Randhawa said there was room for further Pakistan-China cooperation in landscaping and horticulture, including possible Chinese support and technical guidance for the Gardenia Hub model nursery and the capital's horticulture sector.

# HEC narrows gender gap to 99:100 but inequality persists across regions

**NADEEM TANOLI**  
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has achieved near gender parity in higher education, with 99 women enrolled for every 100 men, but the gains have largely bypassed rural and low-income populations, according to the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report 2026. The report identifies Pakistan as a key example of progress in gender inclusion alongside persistent inequality in access based on geography and wealth. The findings high-

light the performance of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), established in 2002 to expand access, improve quality, and support underserved groups. Over the past two decades, the HEC has significantly increased female participation in universities, raising the gender parity index from 78 women per 100 men in 2004 to 99 per 100 by 2020, marking one of the most notable improvements in the country's education sector. Despite this

progress, the report delivers a critical assessment of the distribution of these gains. It concludes that the expansion of higher education in Pakistan has disproportionately benefited wealthy, urban populations, while students from rural areas and low-income backgrounds remain largely excluded. The report notes that structural barriers, including limited access to institutions, financial constraints, and geographic disparities, continue to restrict opportunities for marginalized

groups. UNESCO emphasizes that while gender-focused policies have successfully reduced disparities between male and female enrollment, they have not addressed deeper socioeconomic inequalities. The report warns that expanding access in numbers alone is insufficient if the benefits are concentrated among already advantaged populations. The analysis underscores that Pakistan's higher education growth has improved inclusion for women who are already

positioned to access the system, particularly in major cities, but has struggled to reach those in underserved districts. This imbalance raises concerns about the overall effectiveness of public policy in achieving equitable education outcomes. The report calls for a shift in policy focus toward equity-driven funding, targeted support for rural and disadvantaged communities, and measures that address the cost and accessibility barriers preventing wider participation

in higher education. Without such reforms, the report warns that existing inequalities will continue to widen despite overall progress in enrollment. UNESCO's assessment positions Pakistan's higher education system as a mixed outcome, where significant gender gains coexist with persistent structural gaps, highlighting the need for urgent policy recalibration to ensure that future expansion benefits all segments of society.

# Opinion & Editorial

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## Another Nuremberg?

**F.S. Aijazuddin**  
WILL the world see another Nuremberg Trial? Or is accountability only for the history books? In 1946, an International Military Tribunal representing the victorious Allied powers (the US, UK, USSR and France) passed judgement at Nuremberg on 24 Nazi acolytes of Hitler. They included Hermann Göring, Rudolf Hess and Joachim von Ribbentrop.

At the Potsdam Conference of 1945, the Big Three (Harry Truman, Clement Attlee and Joseph Stalin) were clear on why they had occupied a defeated Germany. They sought five Ds: "disarmament, demilitarisation, denazification, democratisation and decentralisation". The tribunal members, however, differed on the trial's aims.

The British wanted "a swift, political decision, rather than a judicial one". Winston Churchill regarded Nazi leaders as "outlaws", to be shot on sight. The Soviets introduced "the concept of crimes against peace". Having suffered incalculable damage and the loss of 27 million Soviets, they demanded reparations. The US insisted on a reform of Germany's body politic, an 'Americanisation' of Germany. The French broadened the concept of culpability to include not just the Nazis but all Germans.

To understand that period, one should read Lara Feigel's

The Bitter Taste of Victory: In the Ruins of the Reich. It provides a searing insight into the years 1945-1949. It reveals a substrata of Western writers, painters, poets, actors, and film directors who travelled to Germany to report on the war's gory aftermath. They included writers Ernest Hemingway, Evelyn Waugh, Rebecca West and Harold Nicolson; painter Laura Knight; poets W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender; actors Marlene Dietrich and Sybil Thorndike; and film director Billy Wilder who compiled a documentary on German concentration camps. (Later, in 1959, he directed the comedy *Some Like It Hot*, featuring Marilyn Monroe.)

Leaders would have us believe that war is justified. The recollections of each make chilling reading. Nicolson describes the once sinister Nazi defendants as "having the appearance of people who travelled in a third-class railway carriage for three successive nights". Thorndike is asked to perform G.B. Shaw's *Arms and the Man* in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where there were still "40,000 inmates [...] and 10,000 corpses rotting in the sun". And Wilder, filming "a whole landscape of corpses", focuses on a man who "glances apathetically at the camera. Then he turns, tries to stand up, and falls over, dead". Yet, despite the horrors surrounding them, nothing prevented these aesthetes from conducting liaisons and affairs, often

with Germans. For many of them, Berlin in July 1945 "became the site of a summer-long cocktail party, taking place against the backdrop of an overheated morgue".

Leaders would have us believe that war is justified. They are wrong. It is no more than a bloodstained "jigsaw puzzle of fighting men, bewildered, terrified civilians, noise, smoke, jokes, pain, fear and unfinished conversations".

If World War I was "the war to end all wars", World War II spawned the hope that there would never be a World War III. The Nuremberg Trials were part of that catharsis. Some like Waugh thought the trials an "injudicious travesty". Others like Nicolson saw it as a corrective restoration of man's natural order: "The inhumane is being confronted with the humane, ruthlessness with equity, lawlessness with patient justice, and barbarism with civilisation." The Nuremberg Trials differed from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1995-2003), in that the TRC pinpointed individual accountability, not collective culpability. Will Donald Trump, Benjamin Netanyahu or any other leader ever be charged with war crimes? In 2024, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his defence minister Yoav Gallant for crimes against humanity, "including using starvation as a method of warfare in Gaza".

Courtesy Dawn

## War and religion

**Aneela Shahzad**

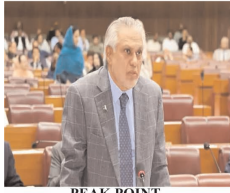
Pope Urban II initiated the two-century-long "holy wars" in 1095. The Crusades that he labelled as "God's will" (Deus vult) saw the killing of nine million people, widespread famine, disease and massacres. Numerous cities, including Antioch, Edessa and Tripoli, were besieged, looted and destroyed. The Church validated for the Crusaders, executing "God's plan", to disrupt trade routes, destroy agricultural land and religious sites, and engage in prostitution in their camps. So abhorrent were the Church's crimes against humanity that the Western mind rightly started hating religion. German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer wrote in the 1820s, "the fruits of Christianity were religious wars, butcheries, crusades, inquisitions, extermination of the natives of America, and the introduction of African slaves in their place." Swiftly after, Europe was overtaken by the likes of secularism, liberalism and feminism, and faith was pushed to the godowns of human conscience. Fast forward to 1991, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the US as a sole superpower. Francis Fukuyama termed the moment as 'the End of History', the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. Humanity tried to embrace the ideas of democracy and liberalism, but soon, it found that it was destined to remain at the base layer of the towering pyramid of the capitalist plutocracy. Samuel Huntington disagreed with Fukuyama and presented the famous thesis arguing that future wars will certainly take place, and "would be fought not between countries, but between cultures". And cultures are based upon language, customs, ethnicities and, most strongly, upon faiths. This time, while Catholic figures in the US have condemned the war on Iran as 'morally illegitimate', the Epstein-cursed political mafia of the US seems to be completely compromised by some satanic frenetic cult mentality, posing as the messianic deliverers of the end-times!

Courtesy Tribune

## Consequence of climate inaction

A new UN report dealing with the weather and climate change has underscored that for Pakistan, the climate crisis is not an abstract future threat, but a present reality. The World Meteorological Organisation's latest State of the Global Climate report paints a dire picture, confirming that the decade from 2015 to 2025 was the hottest on record, with oceans reaching unprecedented heat levels for nine years on the trot. For Pakistan, these global statistics translate into a national emergency. This year alone, monsoon rains were made 15% more intense by human-caused climate change, according to World Weather Attribution. The heavier rains resulted in hundreds of deaths, thousands of destroyed homes and countless displaced families. It is also worth recalling that, for all of the harm that Pakistan has to suffer, it is also one of the smallest contributors to global GHG emissions — less than one per cent — meaning that the country is taking on a disproportionate amount of damage because of the historical excess of other countries, almost all of whom have shirked their responsibility to the world we all share. When countries such as the UK, Australia and New Zealand roll back their climate commitments, or in the case of the US, pull an about-face, it is Pakistanis who suffer the consequences.

## DPM Dar says US-Iran 'indirect talks' taking place through messages being relayed by Pakistan



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday said that US-Iran "indirect talks" were taking place through messages being relayed by Pakistan. "There has been unnecessary speculation in the media regarding peace talks to end ongoing conflict in the Middle East," he said in a post on the social media platform X.

"In reality, US-Iran indirect talks are taking place through messages being relayed by Pakistan. In this context, the United States has shared 15 points, being deliberated upon by Iran," he said. "Brotherly countries of Turkey and Egypt, among others, are also extending their support to this initiative," he said. "Pakistan remains fully committed to promoting peace and continues to make every effort to

ensure stability in the region and beyond," he said, adding that dialogue and diplomacy were the only way forward.

He also tagged US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US President Donald Trump's Middle East Envoy Steve Witkoff in the post.

The development comes a day after an acknowledgement of Pakistan's role in backchannel diplomacy between the warring sides, as Iranian officials confirmed that Pakistan had passed on a proposal from the US to Iran for ending the war. This seemed to be a reference to the '15-point plan' that Trump had referred to a day earlier. Although its contents were not officially disclosed, as per Israel's Channel 12, it centred around stopping Iran from building nuclear weapons, limiting its missile programme in range and quantity, supporting its support for Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza and the Houthis in Yemen, as well as reopening the Strait of Hormuz so it could function as a "free maritime corridor".

In exchange, the plan promised the lifting of all sanctions on Iran, and international assistance in developing its nuclear capacity for energy production. However, Iran's state-run Press

TV reported on Wednesday that Tehran had "responded negatively" to the American proposal, citing a senior political-security official.

"The official with knowledge of the details of the proposal... said Iran will not allow US President Donald Trump to dictate the timing of the war's end," it said.

"Iran will end the war when it decides to do so and when its own conditions are met," the official said, outlining five conditions under which Tehran would agree to end the ongoing conflict. These include: a complete halt to "aggression and assassinations" by the enemy; the establishment of concrete mechanisms to ensure that the war is not reimposed on the Islamic Republic; guaranteed and clearly defined payment of war damages and reparations; the conclusion of the war across all fronts and for all resistance groups involved throughout the region; and, international recognition and guarantees regarding Iran's sovereign right to exercise authority over the Strait of Hormuz.

Meanwhile, Reuters reported that despite its initial negative response, Iran was still reviewing the US proposal and had not rejected it outright, citing an unnamed senior Iranian official.

## Aleem Khan, Iranian envoy discuss regional situation, bilateral cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Ambassador, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, called on Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan here Thursday to discuss the current regional situation and matters of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the federal minister expressed his profound grief and condolences over the martyrdom of Iran's Supreme Leader and the significant loss of life and property resulting from recent events, said a press release.

The Minister remarked that the Pakistani nation pays a rich tribute to Iran and its people, noting that over the past 26 days, Iran has set a new example of courage and bravery. He emphasized that the hearts of the entire Muslim Ummah beat in unison with Iran and con-



veyed a message of goodwill, expressing hope for a brighter and better future for the brotherly nation. Iranian Ambassador, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, thanked the Federal Minister for his prompt message of condolence and expressed his gratitude to the great Pakistani nation for its support. He stated his firm belief that, just as in the past, Iran would once again be blessed with victory. The meeting also featured a detailed discussion on various trade and bilateral issues between Iran and Pakistan.

## Musadik vows weekly plantation drives in Isb after March 31

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Musadik Malik on Thursday said weekly tree plantation drives would be held across Islamabad after March 31, as the government stepped up efforts to promote environmental protection in the capital.

Addressing a tree plantation drive at Shakarparian, the minister said the campaign would continue for at least one to two months, with plantation activities to be carried out at different locations across the city.

He said the government had already pledged to plant 10 trees for every one cut in Islamabad and added that the process had now begun in practical terms.

He also invited the media and the public to observe the plantation work and assess the government's progress on the commitment.

Musadik Malik linked tree plantation with broader climate concerns, saying rising temperatures, carbon emissions and greenhouse gases were contributing to extreme weather events, including floods and glacier melt.

He said trees played a key role in maintaining ecological balance by absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.

Referring to earlier plantation efforts, the minister said trees planted previously were being protected and had started to grow, describing this as evidence that the government's promise was being implemented.

He also stressed the importance of involving children in environmental efforts, saying public awareness and participation in tree plantation could help build a wider culture of climate responsibility across the country.



Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr Musadik Masood Malik, addresses a spring tree plantation drive at Shakarparian, organised by Pak-EPA Islamabad in collaboration with telecom operator Zong, Islamabad.

## Dr. Tariq Fazal criticizes PTI leaders' meeting with Arif Aajakia

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Thursday said that the recent meeting of Zulfikar Bukhari and the sons of Imran Khan with Arif Aajakia does not fall within the scope of normal political activity.

In a statement on X, he said the activities of Zulfikar Bukhari and PTI founder's sons reflect a clear political agenda, with national interests allegedly sidelined for personal and political purposes. He added that meetings with controversial and anti-Pakistan figures like Aajakia appear to be part of a carefully orchestrated plan rather than routine political engagement. The minister warned that certain elements are attempting to create a negative perception of Pakistan at the global level to sustain their political relevance. He stressed that, at a time when the country needs unity, stability, and responsible leadership, such actions weaken the national narrative.

## Hanif Abbasi meets newly appointed IG Railways Police

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Thursday met with newly appointed Inspector General (IG) Railways Police Fakhar Sultan. During the meeting, the minister congratulated Fakhar Sultan on assuming his new responsibilities and expressed confidence in his ability to improve the performance of the Railways Police.

Hanif Abbasi emphasized the need for strict measures to curb smuggling and directed that all appointments and operations within the Railways Police must strictly adhere to merit. The minister underscored that transparency and meritocracy would remain the guiding principles in handling all cases, adding that no compromise would be made on these standards.



Hanif Abbasi also made it clear that theft or misuse of government resources would not be tolerated under any circumstances. He announced the implementation of a "zero tolerance" policy against corruption and warned that incompetent and corrupt officials would have no place in the department. Furthermore, Hanif Abbasi ordered strict action against encroachments on railway land and directed authorities to activate the anti-encroachment cell to address the issue effectively.

## Governor KP reviews Sehat Insaf Card services; appoints singer as Red Crescent goodwill ambassador

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday reviewed facilities being provided under the Sehat Insaf Card programme and stressed the need for improving healthcare services, particularly in rural areas of the province.

The Governor was briefed during a meeting at Governor House Peshawar by Chief Executive Officer Health Card State Life Insurance KP, Riaz Tanoli. The briefing highlighted medical facilities being extended to the public under the Sehat Insaf Card initiative. It was informed that four hospitals in Dera Ismail Khan were currently providing



treatment facilities under the programme. However, the Governor was told that specialist doctors were not available in hospitals located in Parova, Daraban, Paharpur and Kulachi tehsils. Expressing concern, the Governor said that the absence of specialist doctors in rural areas reflected a lack of seriousness on the part of the provincial government in the health sector.

## SAPM Haroon, Kuwaiti envoy discuss ways to enhance bilateral cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan on Thursday met with Ambassador of Kuwait to Pakistan Nasser Abdulrahman Jassim Al-Mutairi and discussed bilateral relations and avenues for enhanced cooperation in diverse fields. The meeting was attended by Secretary for Industries and Production Capt (r) Saif Anjum, Secretary Commerce and Trade Jawad Paul, and Director General (DG) National Logistics Corporation (NLC) Major

General Farrukh Shehzad Rao, a news release said. During the meeting, Haroon Akhtar Khan emphasized that Kuwait was a brotherly country and Pakistan shared strong and longstanding relations with it.

He highlighted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan was actively working day and night to promote peace in the region amid challenging geopolitical circumstances.

He further informed that the Prime Minister has constituted special committees to enhance food exports to Gulf countries, underscoring



Pakistan's desire to expand business-to-business linkages and explore new investment opportunities between the two countries. Haroon Akhtar noted that

Pakistan offered a vast market for Kuwait and is rich in natural resources and natural beauty. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening trade, investment, and export relations with Kuwait. He also highlighted that the Prime Minister's vision is to connect Pakistan more closely with Gulf countries and promote shared prosperity.

Ambassador Nasser Abdulrahman Jassim Al-Mutairi appreciated the support extended by the people of Pakistan during difficult times and expressed gratitude for their solidarity.

He reaffirmed Kuwait's interest in enhancing coop-

eration with Pakistan in key sectors, including food, information technology, and trade.

Secretary Industries Saif Anjum highlighted that there was significant potential for collaboration in mobile phone manufacturing and other industrial sectors.

DG NLC Major General Farrukh Shehzad Rao emphasized the opportunities for expanding cooperation in logistics, cargo, and transportation between the two countries.

Both sides expressed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations and exploring new avenues of cooperation.