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Komal Meer reacts to body-shaming, cosmetic surgery claims

Wednesday 23 April 2025

Shawal 24, 1446 A.H VOL No: 05 Issue No. 120 Pages 4 Rs.10

PM Shehbaz departs for two-day Turkiye visit

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday departed here for a two-day visit to Turkiye, at the invitation of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed Ishaq Dar, Information and Broadcasting Minister Attaullah Tarar and Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi, according to a PM Office press release. During the visit, the prime minister will hold

extensive discussions with President Erdogan on bilateral relations as well as exchange views on recent developments in the region and beyond. As long-standing allies and strategic partners, Pakistan and Turkiye maintain a tradition of regular high-level exchanges, reflecting the exceptional bonds of brotherhood between the two nations. The two countries also have institutionalized leadership-level mechanism in the form of High Level Strategic



Cooperation Council (HLSCC) for cooperation and coordination on various issues of mutual interest. The 7th session of HLSCC was held in Islamabad on February 12-13, 2025 chaired by President Erdogan and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The upcoming meeting represents a continuation of this robust dialogue and underscores the shared commitment to further elevate the multifaceted partnership between Pakistan and Turkiye.

Terrorist attack on police post in Bannu foiled

PEAK POINT

BANNU: A terrorist attack was thwarted on a police post in Bannu city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday. The Central Police Office Peshawar said 18 to 19 terrorists attempted to attack the Dharay Pul police checkpoint in Bannu at night. It said the terrorists arrived on eight motorcycles, and three of them were seen advancing toward the checkpoint. The terrorists had planned to target the checkpoint's surveillance cameras and launch an

attack, but as police took action, the terrorists opened firing from different directions. Police personnel responded timely and successfully foiled the attack. However, the terrorists managed to flee the scene. IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zulfiqar Hameed has praised the police personnel who thwarted the attack on the checkpoint. The Central Police Office has termed this operation a major success against the menace of terrorism and stated that the police will continue to confront anti-peace elements at all costs.

At least 24 killed in occupied Kashmir gunmen attack on tourists

PEAK POINT

KASHMIR: At least 24 people were killed in India-occupied Kashmir when gunmen opened fire on a group of tourists on Tuesday, a senior police officer said, with authorities calling it the worst attack on civilians in years. At least 24 people have been killed, the senior police officer in Kashmir told AFP on condition of anonymity, with the toll not yet announced officially. The attack took place in Pahalgam, a popular destination in the scenic Muslim-majority territory, that draws thousands

of visitors every summer as gunmen violence has reduced in recent years. The injured had been rushed to a local hospital, the source said on the condition of anonymity as they are not authorised to speak to the media. One security source put the death toll at 20, while a second put it at 24 and a third at 26. All three spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media. "The firing happened in front of us," one witness told broadcaster India Today, without giving his name. "We thought someone was



setting off firecrackers, but when we heard other people [screaming], we quickly got out of there... saved our lives and ran." "For four kilometres, we did not stop... I am shaking," another witness told India Today. A tour guide told AFP he reached the scene after hearing gunfire and transported some of the

wounded away on horseback. "I saw a few men lying on the ground looking like they were dead," said Waheed, who gave only one name. Medics at a hospital in Anantnag said they had received some of the wounded, including at least two with gunshot wounds, one with a bullet injury to the neck. The attack took place in an off-the-road meadow and two or three suspects were involved, the Indian Express newspaper reported, citing an unidentified senior police officer. "The death toll is still being ascertained so I

don't want to get into those details," Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omr Abdullah said in a post on X. "Needless to say, this attack is much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years." The nationalities of the victims were not immediately known. A little-known group called the "Kashmir Resistance" claimed responsibility for the attack in a social media message. It expressed discontent that more than 85,000 "outsiders" had been settled in the region, spurring a "demographic change."

World Earth Day 2025: Minister calls for collective action to protect planet

AYESAH REHAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan joined the global observance of World Earth Day 2025 on Tuesday, with Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environment Ijaz ul Haq, Dr. Mussaddiq Malik, emphasizing the need for collective action to protect the planet. Under the global theme "Our Power, Our Planet," Dr. Malik stressed that addressing the climate crisis requires immediate and unified efforts. "The solution to the climate crisis lies

in our hands," he said in his Earth Day message, highlighting Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change. The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to transitioning to clean energy, calling it a "top priority." Initiatives such as "Roshan Pakistan," green stimulus programs, and promoting electric vehicles remain key focuses. Dr. Malik urged practical steps like tree planting, water conservation, and reducing plastic use, stating, "Through unity, awareness, and innovation,

PM to decide on canals project, Sindh open to discussion: Sanaullah

SAMRA ATHAR

ISLAMABAD: The Sindh government has signalled its readiness to engage in talks over the contentious canal project, with the matter now under the consideration of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as disputes persist. "The prime minister will take an appropriate decision on this matter," said Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah. Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon, meanwhile, underlined that "whenever talks take place, they will be at the government level." Speaking on Geo News'

programme "Geo Pakistan," Sanaullah sought to reassure the public that Sindh's interests would be safeguarded. "[We do not have] any intention to steal even a drop of Sindh's water," he said, adding that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was ready for dialogue and that the federal government was taking the issue seriously. The minister also sought to downplay remarks by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who had warned last week that his party would part ways with the ruling coalition if the federal government failed to address its serious reservations over the controversial canals project. The project triggered a



programme "Geo Pakistan," Sanaullah sought to reassure the public that Sindh's interests would be safeguarded. "[We do not have] any intention to steal even a drop of Sindh's water," he said, adding that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was ready for dialogue and that the federal government was taking the issue seriously. The minister also sought to downplay remarks by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who had warned last week that his party would part ways with the ruling coalition if the federal government failed to address its serious reservations over the controversial canals project. The project triggered a

whose names are on the list should go for the meeting, why do others go? They go to prison and create such an atmosphere," he remarked, calling for improved conduct and cooperation with prison staff. Memon echoed the federal government's stance on dialogue and reiterated the province's concerns. "The canal issue is of public concern," he said, adding "Sindh government is representing the people of Sindh." Memon said that objections to the canal project had been raised on multiple occasions and forums. "If the federal government wants to discuss the matter, it is dis-

come. The PPP will certainly advocate the case of the people of Sindh," he stated. Meanwhile, protests in Sindh on the issue continue to cause disruption. Memon appealed to protesters to protest responsibly. "Protesters have been requested to hold their protests in the grounds, not block the roads, the common people are being harmed," he said. He noted that containers carrying livestock were stuck and food items were spoiling due to road blockages. "Everyone has the right to protest, I ask the protesters not to harm the public through protests," he added, also urging protesters not to block railway tracks.

Pope Francis's funeral to be held on Saturday, many world leaders expected

PEAK POINT

FRANCE: Pope Francis' funeral will be held on Saturday in St Peter's Square, Roman Catholic cardinals decided on Tuesday, setting the stage for a solemn ceremony that will draw leaders from around the world. Francis, 88, died unexpectedly on Monday after suffering a stroke and cardiac arrest, the Vatican said, ending an often turbulent reign in which he repeatedly clashed with traditionalists and championed the poor and marginalised. The pontiff spent five weeks in hospital earlier this year suffering from double pneumonia. But he returned to the

Vatican almost a month ago and had seemed to be recovering, appearing in St Peter's Square on Easter Sunday. The Vatican on Tuesday released photographs of Francis dressed in his vestments and laid in a wooden coffin in the chapel of the Santa Marta residence, where he lived during his 12-year papacy. Swiss Guards stand on either side of the casket. His body will be taken into the adjacent St Peter's Basilica on Wednesday morning at 9:00am (0700 GMT), in a procession led by cardinals, allowing the faithful to pay their last respects to the first Latin American pope.

Anti-canal protests should continue without troubling people, says Sindh CM

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Amid ongoing protests and blockage of highways against the construction of six new canals on the Indus River, provincial Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday urged demonstrators to remain peaceful and avoid causing hardship to commuters and the general public. Addressing a press conference in Karachi, CM Murad said: "Lawyers and nationalists should continue their protest without troubling their own people." He said that the PPP and protesters share the same goal, adding that his party would also stage protests if their ongoing negotiations with the federal government

remained fruitless. In February this year, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz launched the Green Pakistan Initiative in Cholistan aimed at revolutionising agriculture and providing farmers with agricultural facilities under one roof. The project triggered a wave of unrest across Sindh, and the provincial assembly in March unanimously passed a resolution against the construction of six new canals on the Indus River. Meanwhile, the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) and other nationalist parties took to the streets and staged massive rallies in different cities of the province,



including Karachi. In his hard-hitting presser today, the Sindh CM announced that the contentious canal project will be blocked at all costs. "The Sindh government and the PPP will not allow the canal project to be built with the power of the people," he added. The CM maintained that work on the canal project had been stalled since July 2024, and the approval of the project had been pending since November last year. He wondered why the project was not abandoned. "Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is also aware of the serious consequences of the canal project," he said and

hoped the premier would act with justice. A protest march by the Save Indus Students Alliance, supported by the Karachi Bachao Tehreek and others, took place at Teen Talwar and marched to Fowara Chowk. The protesters were also joined by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Jr. The protest, like many others in the province, demonstrated against the canal project and held a demonstration at Fowara Chowk. A day earlier, Special Assistant to PM on political affairs Rana Sanaullah telephoned Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon for the third consecutive day to discuss the matter. "The prime minister will take an appropriate

decision on this matter," said Sanaullah, while Memon emphasised that "whenever talks take place, they will be at the government level." Speaking on Geo News' programme "Geo Pakistan" on Tuesday, Sanaullah assured that Sindh's interests would not be compromised. "We do not have any intention to steal even a drop of Sindh's water," he said, adding that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was ready for dialogue and that the federal government was taking the issue seriously. The minister also sought to downplay remarks made by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who had warned last week that his party

would part ways with the ruling coalition if the federal government failed to address its serious reservations over the controversial canal project. "What Bilawal said at the public gathering was said in the heat of delivering a speech," said Sanaullah. He urged restraint in political discourse and reminded all sides to maintain mutual respect. "There is no need to react to what Bilawal said. Statements should remain within limits, and others must be shown respect and dignity," he added. Memon echoed the federal government's stance on dialogue and reiterated the province's concerns. "The canal issue is of public con-

cern," he said, adding: "Sindh government is representing the people of Sindh." Memon added that objections to the canal project had been raised on multiple occasions and forums. "If the federal government wants to discuss the matter, it is welcome. The PPP will certainly advocate the case of the people of Sindh," he stated. Meanwhile, protests in Sindh on the issue continue to cause disruption. Memon appealed to demonstrators to protest responsibly. "Protesters have been requested to hold their protests in the grounds, not block the roads, the common people are being harmed," he said.



Yasir, Ubaid propel Multan Sultans to first triumph in PSL X

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

MULTAN: Yasir Khan's quickfire half-century and Ubaid Shah's outstanding bowling spell handed Multan Sultans first victory in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 10 as they defeated Lahore Qalandars by 33 runs in the tournament's 12th match played at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Tuesday.

Chasing a daunting 229-run target, the visitors could only accumulate 195/9 in their allotted overs despite Sikandar Raza's half-century.

The Qalandars got off to a decent start to the pursuit with openers Muhammad Naem and Fakhar Zaman putting together a brisk 38-run stand.

soon hindered as Naem fell victim to Michael Bracewell in the fourth over after scoring a run-a-ball 11.

Fakhar followed suit in the next over as he skied a fuller delivery by Ubaid Shah, which was brilliantly caught by Josh Little in the deep.

The opening batter scored 32 off 14 deliveries, laced with two fours and three sixes.

The Qalandars then began to lose wickets at regular intervals which halted the flow of the runs for the two-time champions.

Wicketkeeper batter Sam Billings offered some resistance in the middle phase of the innings until he was outclassed by Ubaid in the 15th over.

He scored 43 off 23 deliveries, smashing two



fours and four sixes. Experienced all-rounder Sikandar Raza played a gutsy half-century down the order but his efforts were not enough to pull off the victory for the Qalandars. Raza remained the top-scorer for the Qalandars with an unbeaten 50 off 27 deliveries, comprised of five fours and three sixes.

Ubaid was the stand-out bowler for the Sultans, picking up three wickets for 37 runs in his four overs.

He was supported by Bracewell and Usama Mir, who bagged two each, while David Willey and Josh Little chipped in with one strike apiece.

Sultans captain Muhammad Rizwan's decision to bat first paid dividends as his team's batting unit yielded 228/5 in 20 overs.

The home side got off to a blazing start to their innings as their new opening pair of Yasir and Rizwan decimated the Qalandars' bowlers and scored 89 runs in seven overs.

Asif Afridi provided a much-needed breakthrough to the two-time champions on the first delivery of the eighth over when he bowled Rizwan around his leg.

The Sultans captain scored a brisk 32 off 17 deliveries with the help

of four fours and a six. Wicketkeeper batter Usman Khan then joined set batter Yasir Khan in the middle and together they raised an important 70-run partnership before both perished in successive overs.

Usman struck five fours and a six on his way to a 24-ball 39, while Yasir top-scored with a blistering 87 off 44 deliveries, studded with six fours and as many sixes.

The 2021 champions suffered another blow in the next over when Rishad Hossain got Ashton Turner (15) caught and brought the total down to 179/4 in 15.4 overs.

Later, Ahmed's brisk 40-run cameo off 18 balls at the back end bolstered Sultans' total past the 200-run mark.

Dutch hockey legend Bovelander to visit Pakistan for training clinic

SAMRA ATHAR

ISLAMABAD: Dutch hockey icon Floris Jan Bovelander is set to arrive in Pakistan next week on a goodwill visit, during which he will conduct a special training clinic at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium, Islamabad. The 59-year-old Bovelander is one of the most celebrated drag flickers in the history of field hockey and a member of the 1990 World Cup-winning Dutch side.

"He will hold an exclusive session with young players of the Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy (KJHA) and different clubs from the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad at Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium on the evening of April 28," head of the KJHA Olympian Khawaja Muhammad Junaid told APP on Tuesday.

According to Junaid, the event will draw a large number of hockey enthusiasts, former Olympians, current national players, sports officials and ambassadors of various countries. He



said the clinic was part of efforts to revive the golden traditions of Pakistan hockey and expose young players to modern techniques and international expertise. He described the visit as a "historic moment" for Pakistan hockey and added that the initiative was being supported by the Prime Minister's Office. "Bovelander is not just a hockey legend, he's an inspira-

tion for generations. His visit is a big boost to our efforts of reviving the glory days of Pakistan hockey," Junaid said. "This clinic will be a great opportunity for our young players to learn from a master of the game. His experience and skills, especially in drag flicks and penalty corners will be invaluable," he added. "Such international interactions help rebuild our image and establish people-to-people contact through sports diplomacy. It's not just training; it's a celebration of hockey," he said. "I'm thankful to the Embassy of the Netherlands in Islamabad for facilitating Bovelander's visit. "Similarly, I'm grateful to Pakistan Sports Board, particularly, its Director General Yasir Pirzada, who always backs the steps for uplift of the national game. "It's a great step towards bridging global hockey communities," he added, Junaid said that Pakistan's Netherlands-based former woman footballer Kayanat Bukhari would also be accompanying the Dutch hockey great. Bovelander, who has previously worked in development projects in South Asia will also meet top officials of Prime Minister Office and Pakistan Hockey Federation and share insights on grassroots development and infrastructure improvement.

Historic win: Pakistani runners finish Boston marathon in style, set unique record

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Two Pakistani runners, Faisal Shafi and Danish Elahi, made history at the world's oldest Boston Marathon by setting a unique world record: completing the race in the fastest time while wearing traditional shalwar kameez.

The athletes, both from Karachi, finished the marathon in three hours and 26 minutes, marking the first time any runner has completed the 26.2-mile race in under four hours while wearing the loose-fitting national attire of Pakistan.

Starting and finishing the race together, Shafi and Elahi said their achievement was a tribute to their country.



"This record is dedicated to all of Pakistan," Elahi told Geo News in an exclusive interview. "Setting a record in a historic race like Boston is truly memorable."

Shafi added, "We did this to highlight Pakistan's positive image, and we will celebrate this victory back home."

The Boston Marathon, first held in 1897, is one of the most prestigious long-distance running events globally. The Pakistani duo's distinctive attire and synchronised finish drew attention, showcasing cultural pride alongside athletic endurance.

Amin Mukaty, Sara Lodhi emerge as Pakistan's fastest at 129th Boston Marathon

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Pakistan's running community made a strong showing at the 129th Boston Marathon on Monday, with Amin Mukaty and Sara Lodhi emerging as the fastest male and female finishers from Pakistan in the prestigious race.

Mukaty, a 23-year-old Karachi-based runner who time qualified for the Boston Marathon, clocked an impressive 2:48:47 on the challenging Boston course, known for its punishing Heartbreak Hill segment.

"Heartbreak Hill couldn't break my heart," posted Mukaty on his Instagram account.

"The Boston Marathon tested my limits but I rose to the challenge. Proud to represent Pakistan on



world stage," he added. Close behind Amin was another Karachiite Abdul Rehman, who crossed the finish line in 2:51:13. "It was challenging with lots of hills but I enjoyed it," Rehman told Geo News. "I think it was

my best run, better than how I ran in Berlin."

The Karachi-based duo was followed by Nizar Nayani, Omer Malik and Sadiq Shah - who ran his 2nd Boston Marathon.

The women's contingent was led by 39-year-



old Sara Lodhi, who finished in 3:24:46 in what marked her ninth career marathon and fifth World Marathon Major. The UAE-based mother of three gave an emotional account of her journey. "As a mother of three

girls, it's really important to me to model that women can achieve anything they set their mind to," Lodhi said. "They see the discipline - waking up at 3am to train before they're ready for school."

Lodhi added that this is the first generation of Pakistani women running marathons and she's grateful to be part of this movement. "Qualifying and performing well here has been a humbling journey. Alhamdulillah."

Meanwhile, six Pakistani runners reached the pinnacle of marathon achievement by becoming Six-Star Finishers, having completed all Abbott World Marathon Majors. Those who earned six-star finishers' medals at Boston include Danish Elahi, Adnan Gandhi.

Karachi Kings' Hasan Ali shares his path to peak fitness

RIZWAN HAIDER

ISLAMABAD: Karachi Kings vice-captain and Pakistan's renowned pacer Hasan Ali shared his resurgence in form to a strict dietary discipline and fitness routine, saying cutting sugar and fried foods has transformed his energy levels and performance.

In an exclusive interview with Geo News, the Karachi Kings vice-captain opened up about the lifestyle changes that helped him regain peak fitness after the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) season.

Hasan, 30, revealed he reduced sugar intake by 70% to 80% and minimised oily foods over the past six months. "In Pakistan, everyone eats fried parathas, and our food has too much oil and



sugar," he said. "But international athletes focus on organic and fresh foods. I made those adjustments, and the difference is massive, I feel more energetic on the field, and I don't feel lethargic anymore in my daily routine, I feel fresh."

Hasan was once known for his foodies' group with several teammates, "Roti Gang," when asked if dietary discipline means they've disbanded the

Roti Gang, Hassan said that it won't happen ever. "No, the Roti Gang isn't finished—it's eternal!" he quipped. However, he stressed moderation, saying disciplined eating has been key to his improved performance.

Hasan attributed his technical improvements to rigorous sessions at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) under the guidance of Pakistan's coaching staff.

Sahibzada Farhan sets sight on national team return, eyes long-term career

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Islamabad United opener Sahibzada Farhan is eyeing return to Pakistan national cricket team and a long-term international career, banking on his strong Pakistan Super League and National T20 form to force his way back into national contention. In an exclusive interview with Geo News, the 29-year-old batsman highlighted that his goal is to secure a stable place in the national side rather than a short-lived opportunity. "My goal is to play for Pakistan again and stay in the team for the long term, not just for one or two matches," Farhan said. "When I return, I want to cement my



place, not just make a brief appearance."

National T20 Cup, where he smashed three centuries and two fifties, for building his confidence ahead of PSL. "Scoring a century early in the National T20 gave me a huge boost," he said. "I had planned to dominate that tournament to grab attention for PSL selection, and thankfully, that form has carried forward."

Farhan was initially overlooked by PSL franchises during the players' draft held in January. He then scored 605 runs in 7 innings for the National T20 tournament. His performances backed by three centuries and two half-centuries convinced the United to later pick Sahibzada Farhan in the supplementary category. Farhan said that his consistency in PSL should silence critics who labelled him a "domestic-only" performer. "People used to say I only score in domestic cricket, but I've proven them wrong in PSL," Farhan said. "Performing in such a high-profile league makes a strong case for international selection." Farhan highlighted the importance of PSL performances in easing the transition to international cricket. "The level of competition here is intense, facing top bowlers in PSL prepares you for the pressures of playing for Pakistan in international cricket," he said.

PCB considers new foreign head coach as it begins to seek new applications

SEHRISH NAZ

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has officially advertised the position of Head Coach for the Pakistan Men's Cricket Team, as it seeks to fill the role with a long-term appointment.

Aqib Javed, who was appointed as the interim head coach until the Champions Trophy, was also given responsibilities during the New Zealand tour. However, sources now revealed that PCB prepares you for the pressures of playing for Pakistan in international cricket," he said.



Performance position. The PCB has posted the vacancy for Head Coach on its official website. In addition, a separate advertisement has been issued for the Director of High Performance post, which

has been vacant since Nadeem Khan's resignation. Sources also indicated that the PCB is open to appointing a foreign head coach once again, signalling a possible shift in strategy for the national team's future direction.



Caption: Malik Khuda Buksh, convener of FPCCI standing committee on energy is presiding the meeting. M. D, NEECA, ED, AWT Genl Abid Saif & CEO, ADM (Chinese Group) is also in the picture along with high office bearer of FPCCI.

Illegal Extortion from Watermelon and Sugarcane Vendors Uncovered in Rawalpindi Cantonment Areas

NADEEM TANOLI

RAWALPINDI: A concerning case of illegal extortion has surfaced in the Rawalpindi Cantonment areas, where vendors selling seasonal fruits such as watermelons and sugarcane are allegedly being forced to pay hefty amounts for setting up stalls. The Enforcement Department of the Chaklala Cantonment Board is reportedly collecting as much as Rs. 80,000 from each vendor, while issuing receipts for significantly lower amounts. This discrepancy has raised serious concerns over adminis-

trative corruption and exploitation of small vendors. Despite previous actions by the Director General of Military Lands and Cantonments to curb illegal encroachments, the situation appears to have reverted in recent days.

Vendors report that officials have resumed collecting unauthorized payments in clear violation of official directives.

These stalls, now prominently visible across markets in Chaklala Cantonment, have multiplied—especially those selling watermelons and sugarcane, two of the most

demand seasonal items. Both watermelon and sugarcane vendors have voiced their frustration, stating that these unofficial payments, amidst already soaring inflation, are crippling their ability to run their businesses.

Many say they are forced to pass on the cost to consumers or suffer losses, making it increasingly unsustainable to operate.

Other market traders have also raised questions about the legality of these setups, asking why stalls are being permitted through backdoor arrangements without proper authorization. However, the

market committee has yet to provide any clarification, further fueling speculation of internal collusion.

Concerned citizens and local trader groups have called upon higher authorities to launch a transparent investigation into the activities of the Chaklala Cantonment Board and to hold accountable those involved in the alleged misconduct.

They emphasize the need for fairness and transparency in public dealings to ensure the rights of small business owners and to restore public trust in regulatory institutions.

Pakistan Boosts Biosafety Oversight with Nationwide Training on Digital Portal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: To strengthen biosafety governance and streamline application processes, the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) has conducted three nationwide training sessions for Institutional Biosafety Committees (IBCs) on using the Pakistan Biosafety Clearing-House (Pak-BCH) portal for submitting applications related to Genetically Modified (GM) work. These ses-

sions, aligned with Pakistan's obligations under Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, focused on enhancing transparency, reducing paperwork, and ensuring compliance. Participants from all notified IBCs received hands-on training covering the four categories of GM work: laboratory manipulation, field trials, commercialization, and food, feed and processing (FFP). The Pak-BCH portal, a centralized digital platform, was

demonstrated as the exclusive channel for application submissions moving forward. Attendees actively engaged with the portal's functionalities and were guided through each step of the submission process, with real-time support from the Pak-BCH technical team. Pak-EPA reaffirmed its commitment to regulatory modernization and ongoing capacity-building through digital tools and stakeholder engagement.

Pakistan and Rwanda Pledge Joint Climate Action and Green Technology Cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: In a key step toward enhancing environmental diplomacy, Pakistan and Rwanda have agreed to deepen cooperation on climate resilience, sustainable development, and environmental governance. This commitment was reaffirmed during a high-

level meeting between Pakistan's Minister of State for Climate Change, Dr. Shehza Mansab Ali Khan, and Rwanda's Foreign Minister, H.E. Ambassador Olivier J.P. Nduhungirehe. Dr. Shehza highlighted Pakistan's increasing export strength in areas like surgical instruments, pharmaceuticals,

and sports goods, and expressed interest in launching cultural exchange programs to boost bilateral ties. He also addressed Pakistan's environmental concerns, including the challenge of plastic waste management and the incomplete export strength in areas like surgical instruments, pharmaceuticals, and sports goods, and expressed interest in launching cultural exchange programs to boost bilateral ties. He also addressed Pakistan's environmental concerns, including the challenge of plastic waste management and the incomplete export strength in areas like surgical instruments, pharmaceuticals,

Vaccination drive begins at 11 Haji Camps across country

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Vaccination for intending pilgrims has commenced at 11 designated Haji camps across the country, said the spokesperson of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony on Tuesday.

Talking to APP, he said due to the special

efforts of Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, arrangements for vaccine supply have also been made from DHQ Muzaffargarh, Dera Ismail Khan. In addition to vaccination, Umar Butt said the packing of essential medicines and distri-

bution of gifts for pilgrims has also started at the camps. Pilgrims are being provided vaccines against meningitis, influenza, and polio as part of the mandatory health requirements, he added. The spokesperson urged pilgrims to visit their respective Haji camps as per the schedule provided to them.

Opinion & Editorial

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Pak-Afghan ties

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar undertook his first official visit to Kabul on Saturday, where Pakistan and Afghanistan reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations, both sides emphasising the need to develop strategies for enhancing cooperation in key areas of mutual interest, including security, trade, transit, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges. During the visit, Acting Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi expressed "deep concern and regret" over the situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, particularly their forced deportation. Afghanistan's prime minister also condemned the "unilateral measures" taken by Pakistan to expel Afghans since early April. In response, Dar announced that four key decisions had been made regarding the repatriation process, with an official notification expected within 48 hours. This notification will include a contact number for refugees to report grievances. Dar assured that any complaints of mistreatment during the repatriation process would be addressed and reaffirmed that Afghan refugees would be sent back with dignity and respect. He also clarified that the Pakistani government had issued no orders to seize Afghan-owned properties. Dar further stated that Afghan officials had agreed to visit Pakistan, underlining that sustained diplomatic engagement and regular committee meetings were essential to resolving and preventing bilateral issues. He reiterated Pakistan's firm stance against terrorism and affirmed that neither country would allow its territory to be used for terror-related activities. Some observers believe Dar's visit could mark the beginning of a thaw in Pak-Afghan relations, while others remain sceptical, suggesting that the status quo may persist.

Stop spoiling the name of Pakistani brands "Analysis"

Wajiha Tameel Mirza

O ur Pakistani people are very emotional; no matter what the issue is, they are quick to get agitated. For instance, these days, our people have taken to violence against a private food company, using the plight of innocent Palestinians as their rationale. Now, when our Palestinian brothers and sisters see your provocations, they won't be offering you garlands of flowers; instead, they will be more disheartened, thinking, "Isn't this the Pakistan that claims to stand with Israel? They are using our name to incite unrest in their own country, targeting their innocent people." More than half of the population has thrown away Cola Next which is good—if something doesn't satisfy your heart, just leave it and boycott it. The best part is that we have an alternative here in Pakistan, and that is Cola Next. Cola Next is a great brand that started being produced in Pakistan in March 2016. This means Cola Next has been in Pakistan for about eight to nine years. The problem now is that recently, some individuals engaged in negative propaganda have not spared Cola Next either, having the desire to tarnish this brand's reputation and push it out of Pakistan. Some people claim that Cola Next is a purely Pakistani brand and is linked to an automated system called "No Thanks." However, that is not true. First, let me clarify that Cola Next is a completely Pakistani product. Recently, a video went viral on social media spreading misconceptions about Cola Next. The truth is that Cola Next is a product of Mizan Group, which is a completely Pakistani company. The "No Thanks" app is an automated system that only reacts based on the company's name, and due to the similarity of the name



"Next," it was mistakenly associated with a Pakistani brand. The "No Thanks" app has also provided its official clarification. Several individuals have cited the Pakistani origins of this brand as proof, pointing out that the company's owner, Zulfiqar, was abducted in December 2024 while a ransom of 500 million was demanded. After narrowly escaping from Karachi, Zulfiqar headed home to Lahore amid rumors that he had fled the country. Well, however you all choose to find out, the truth is that Cola Next is indeed a Pakistani brand. Now let's talk about the lineage of the Cola Next Company and how its discovery was made possible. Cola Next is a creation of Mizan Groups of Companies, and Mizan Beverages Private Limited successfully launched its beverage project in a record time of one year, starting production in March 2016. This is the latest integrated infrastructure in Pakistan, alongside a modern plant. The company owners say that it was established in 1951-52 as Pracha Textile Mills Limited. Its foundation was laid by the former Governor-General of Pakistan, Khawaja Nazimuddin. The current administration took over the company in 1983. Soon after, the Board of Directors promoted its vision to establish an edible oil market in Pakistan, which was a reputable, relatively new, and developing market. A ghee unit was established and the production of ghee and cooking oils of various brands began. Today, Mizan Group proudly produces Mizan Oil and Banaspati, Olive Oil (Oliveola), Mizan Ultra Rich, Mizan Har Durr, and Mizan Baitak and provides office space in the state-of-the-art

Mizan Tower, managed by the Mizan Property Wing. Mizan Beverages, deeply rooted in Pakistani culture and society, takes pride in being a socially responsible company. In this new era, the company believes in continuous improvement to provide the highest quality and efficiency at all levels of operation. The company owners state that as we approach the WTO scenario, the competition is becoming tougher. Therefore, our company is continuously enhancing its systems and adopting the latest technology to improve energy consumption and product quality. The company owners and employees say that our mission is to produce high-quality beverages that reach the public, keeping hygiene principles in mind. If we talk about the popularity of Cola Next among certain demographics, youth would definitely be at number one, as they prefer Cola Next while boycotting Coca-Cola. When we press the television remote, the energetic slogan advertisement of Cola Next pops up immediately, which is enough to ignite any young person's enthusiasm "Level Up, Come to Next!" Because "Cola Next is Pakistan" is a slogan that further boosts the demand for this beverage. Renowned names from the Pakistani industry, including Hamza Ali Abbasi, Ali Azmat, Saba Qamar, Humayun Saeed, and others, have ensured their association with this beverage. They do that, but stop using provocation and lies to defame pure Pakistani brands. Adopt a loyal and sensitive approach towards your country, and refrain from unnecessarily tarnishing the names of Pakistani products, "because Cola Next is Pakistan!"

Invisible siege

Qurat ul ain Siddiqui

THE heat arrives early now. By April, much of Pakistan is already sweltering, with temperatures nearing 40 degrees Celsius and humidity thick in the air. In the south, fans spin uselessly as the heat turns predatory. Hospitals begin seeing heatstroke victims even before summer officially begins. Glaciers in the north, melting rapidly, feed rivers that now swing between drought and flood. In parts of Sindh, the mercury soars past tolerable limits, scorching crops into dust. Farmers in Thar brace for annual winds that dry out land and lives alike, all signs of a climate crisis Pakistan didn't cause, but one it must now survive, against impossible odds.

For decades, our environmental policy has resembled a game of whac-a-mole — swatting at symptoms while not thinking much of the root beneath. In the 1990s, the logging mafias of KP denuded mountainsides with impunity, triggering landslides that buried entire villages. The state projected to train and task forces, but the lumber trucks kept rolling. By 2010, Pakistan's forest cover had dwindled to among the lowest in Asia. Then came the Billion Tree Tsunami, launched in 2014 as a rare success story. Over eight years, more than a billion saplings were planted, reviving watersheds and creating green jobs. But in recent years, rains have damaged large swaths of the new plantations, while deforested slopes have left villages once again vulnerable to floods — exposing how fragile that progress remains. What has played out in the forests echoes in other domains: bursts of ambition, followed by backsliding. Pakistan's energy and water policies reflect a similar pattern of progress undercut by dysfunction. The country's push into solar power has led to desert solar farms and rooftop incentives, yet the national grid, a creaking relic of the 20th century, remains hostage to inertia. Coal still powers a sizeable chunk of electricity, while gas shortages push factories to burn tyres, filling already polluted neighbourhoods with toxic fumes. Despite scattered innovations, the system remains locked in a cycle where short-term fixes overshadow long-term reform. Water scarcity deepens these contradictions. By 2025, Pakistan is projected to be South Asia's most water-stressed nation, with per capita availability dropping from 5,650 cubic metres in 1951 to just 860. The country's storage capacity covers only 30 days of demand — well below the global average of 120. In cities like Karachi, many rely on private water tankers, paying in some cases as high as Rs6,000 for 1,000 gallons. Elsewhere, groundwater tables are plunging and contamination from sewage and industry is quietly poisoning what remains.

Earth Day 2025 invites reflection on the deeper malaise. Both crises reveal the same fault line: a system built to serve the powerful while leaving the rest to endure — where thirst, like heat, is not just a symptom, but a manifestation of structural inequality. Technical fixes alone cannot mend what is broken. The deeper, maldy lies in perception. A failure to recognise that environmental collapse is not a niche concern but the meta crisis swallowing all others. Inflation, terrorism, political instability; these are symptoms of a biosphere in revolt. When crops fail, farmers migrate to cities already bursting at the seams; when floods destroy infrastructure, foreign investors flee; when heatwaves cripple labour, GDP withers.

Courtesy Dawn

Pakistan open to FDIs from US firms: Finance Minister

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb has said Pakistan is open to foreign direct investments from United States (US) firms in its recently opened minerals and mining sectors and is preparing to debut its first-ever Panda bond in the range of \$200 million to \$250 million this year.

He was talking to the Bloomberg News during his week-long trip in the US to participate in the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

He said Pakistan is looking to buy more goods from the US, including cotton and soybean, and remove non-tariff barriers to escape President Donald Trump's

high tariffs, said a press release issued by Ministry of Finance on Tuesday. "It's a bigger canvas that we are looking at in terms of engaging the US," Aurangzeb said adding "We will constructively engage, and we will have a formal delegation coming in."

The minister said Pakistan is trying to rebuild its economy after coming close to default in 2023, and has won an initial nod for a \$2.3 billion IMF loan that will give it funding visibility until 2027.

He said that Pakistan is looking to buy more cotton and soybean from the US, adding that it is also in talks to tear down non-trade barriers to open its markets to more US products.

Minister Aurangzeb said, "We can also look at if there are any

issues with respect to non-tariff discussion, whether there are onerous inspections at our end for US products, we can obviously view that." He said that Islamabad is trying to appease the US to seek reprieve from the 29% reciprocal tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump. While those levies are on hold until July, Pakistan will send a trade delegation to Washington in the coming months to bridge the trade gap. He said the US is Pakistan's largest export market with over \$5 billion in annual exports as of 2024, while Pakistan's imports from the US are about \$2.1 billion. The minister said the country is also open to foreign direct investments from US firms in its recently opened minerals and mining sectors.



WASHINGTON, D.C. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb participates in IMF panel discussion on "Revenue Mobilization in the Medium Term" during the spring meetings 2025.

Tashkent Honors Team Pakistan Pakistani Ambassador, Ahmed Farooq Welcomes SAMBO Delegation with Open Arms



PEAK POINT

TASHKENT: In a heartfelt gesture of national pride and diplomatic support, Pakistan's Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Mr. Ahmed Farooq, warmly welcomed the Pakistani SAMBO team currently participating in the prestigious Asia and Oceania SAMBO Championship 2025 in Tashkent.

The delegation, headed by Khurshid Khan, Senior Vice President of the Pakistani SAMBO Federation and team manager, met the ambassador on his special invitation. During

the meeting, Khurshid Khan thanked Ambassador Farooq for his hospitality and shed light on the team's experience in the championship, the importance of international exposure, and the pride of representing Pakistan on a global stage.

Ambassador Farooq praised the athletes for their commitment and conveyed that Uzbekistan offers tremendous opportunities for Pakistani investors and entrepreneurs.

He assured the delegation that the Embassy stands ready to provide full support to those

exploring trade and business ventures in the region. To honor the visiting delegation, Ambassador Farooq presented a traditional Uzbek souvenir to Khurshid Khan, who received it as a symbol of brotherhood and goodwill from the people of Uzbekistan to the Pakistani nation.

Also present during the cordial exchange were media advisor Liaqat Yousafzai and members of the SAMBO team, who expressed their gratitude for the encouragement and warmth extended by the ambassador.

Amir Muqam calls on OIC Assistant Secretary General Yousuf Muhammad Al-Dubay

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, CILGIT-Balistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam met with OIC Assistant Secretary General and Special Representative on Jammu and Kashmir, Ambassador Yousuf Muhammad Al-Dubay.

The minister said that Pakistan values the OIC's continued and unwavering support, which is a core component of the OIC's agenda for the Kashmir cause, said a press release here on Tuesday. The OIC has openly condemned the gross and systematic violations of human rights of the Kashmiri people by India and has strongly supported the right of Kashmiris to self-determination in accordance with the United Nations Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions. He said that the situation in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir remains a matter of deep concern. It has now been more than

five years since India's illegal and unilateral actions on August 5, 1949, aimed at changing the internationally recognized disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir and changing its demographic structure.

He said that the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The people have rejected the Modi party in the so-called elections. Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam said that Pakistan will continue to play its role to ensure the holding of a free and impartial plebiscite in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

He said: "We will continue to provide moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people until they achieve their inalienable right to self-determination." Expressing his views, Yousuf Muhammad Al-Dubay said that his visit to Pakistan was to understand and learn about the changing situation of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Pakistan, Rwanda pledge to strengthen ties in defence, trade, and peacekeeping

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Rwanda agreed to enhance cooperation in defence, trade, investment, and education during a meeting between Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Rwanda's Foreign Minister Olivier J.P. Nduhungirehe here on Tuesday.

Defence Minister Asif emphasized Pakistan's commitment to deepening ties with Rwanda, stating, "Pakistan greatly values the friendly relations with Rwanda and will continue to strengthen cooperation within regional and international organiza-



tions." He highlighted both nations' shared dedication to global peace, noting their roles as top contributors to UN peacekeeping missions. Nduhungirehe praised Pakistan's efforts in conflict resolution, particularly as a non-per-

manent UN Security Council member, saying, "Pakistan has played a significant role in seeking solutions to African conflicts." The discussions also covered collaboration in trade and investment, with both sides agreeing to expand bilateral engagements.

Commerce Minister, Kyrgyz Ambassador discusses ways to boost bilateral trade connectivity

HUMAREHAN

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan, Avazbek Atakhanov, called on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, at his office on Tuesday to discuss avenues for strengthening bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Rana Ihsaan Afzal, Coordinator to the Prime Minister and senior officials of the Ministry of Commerce were also present during the meeting, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

The commerce minister welcomed the ambassador and emphasized the importance Pakistan attaches to its historic and cultural ties with Kyrgyzstan. He expressed



Pakistan's strong desire to transform these brotherly relations into a comprehensive economic partnership for mutual benefit. During the meeting, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing collaboration across various sectors, especially in trade, investment, and regional connectivity. Jam Kamal Khan briefed the ambassador on Pakistan's improving economic indi-

cators, including declining inflation and interest rates, reduced energy costs, and a stable foreign exchange market—factors that indicate macroeconomic stability and present new opportunities for trade and investment. He stressed the need to address trade-related issues and encouraged greater engagement between the business communities of both sides.

Earth's protection shared responsibility: Gilani

MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Tuesday said that the protection of the Earth is a collective responsibility, urging all segments of society to adopt eco-conscious practices and promote environmental stewardship.

In his message issued on the occasion of International Earth Day, Gilani said, "Earth is our mother, and it is our duty to preserve its natural treasures for future generations."

He stressed the importance of the prudent use of natural resources, noting that the day serves as a powerful reminder of humanity's shared obligation to safeguard the planet.

Reaffirming the Senate's commitment to eco-friendly legislation and sustainable development, he said Parliament continues to prioritise environmental initiatives and policies aligned with global best practices.

Calling upon the

youth to take the lead in environmental conservation, Gilani emphasized that raising awareness and adopting sustainable habits are critical in the face of growing ecological challenges.

"The responsibility of protecting the Earth does not lie with the government alone. Every individual must contribute to building a greener and more sustainable future," he said.

He also reaffirmed

Pakistan's commitment to fulfilling its international obligations under environmental protection agreements, underscoring the importance of preserving ecosystems and combating climate change through collaborative global efforts.

On the Day, Chairman Senate Gilani expressed his resolve to work for a cleaner, greener, and more resilient Pakistan, calling for national unity and proactive engagement in environmental preservation.

State Minister urge climate action on World Earth Day 2025

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Climate Change & Environmental

Coordination, Dr. Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Khattar, Tuesday urged citizens to take practical steps—such as planting trees, conserving water, and reducing plastic use—to support sustainability.

"Every small step contributes to achieving environmental sustainability," she said in her message on World Earth Day 2025 being observed today.

The minister highlighted Pakistan's ongoing efforts, including reforestation, smart agriculture, clean mobility, and renewable energy projects.

She called for unity among communities, policymakers, and stakeholders to back government initiatives protecting vital resources like water, forests, and air. "With awareness, innovation, and collective will, Pakistan can restore the planet and secure a better future," Dr. Shezra concluded.

Pakistan marked World Earth Day 2025 with calls for urgent environmental action, emphasizing reforestation, clean energy, and sustainable policies.

Anti-polio campaign smoothly underway in Bannu

UMER DIAZ KHAN

BANNU: Polio campaign continues across the district for the second day under strict security arrangements. Regional Police Officer Imran Shahid and District Police Officer Saleem Abbas Kalachi are present in the field. Under the directions of RPO Imran Shahid and DPO Saleem Abbas Kalachi, extraordinary security measures have been implemented throughout the district during the anti-polio campaign. On the second day, the campaign continued within complete security cordon, where police officers and personnel are performing their duties with utmost seriousness. The RPO and DPO personally remained in the field and reviewed the ongoing security



arrangements in various areas. They conducted direct inspections of BHUs (Basic Health Units), vaccination teams' security, and police deployments, issuing instructions to ensure timely response to any potential threat. During this time, SDPOs of the respective circles also visited different BHUs periodically, met with on-duty police personnel, and assessed their performance. Important

instructions were given to the police officials, including staying fully alert while on duty, mandatory use of helmets and jackets, avoiding mobile phone use, and keeping a close watch on suspicious individuals. Bannu Police, while committed to public service, is also actively working for a safe future for children and is determined to provide every possible protection to the anti-polio campaign.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani addressing as Chief guest at the Eighth Three-Day International Conference on "Mevlana Rumi and Hadrat Sultan Bahoo".