

Foreign Minister of Iran Meets Pakistan's Leadership to Strengthen Bilateral Ties



UN Security Council Holds Emergency Session as India-Pakistan Tensions Mount



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THE WORLD AMBASSADOR

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UNESCO World Day of the Portuguese Language and of the Portuguese-Speaking Countries' Cultures

Ambassadors of Turkiye and Oman Call on Pakistan Naval Chief to Discuss Regional Security and Cooperation

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Letter from the Editor

In today's interconnected world, The World Ambassador brings you compelling stories and insights that shape global perspectives. Each month, we explore a wide range of topics—from public health and social challenges to technology and entertainment—aiming to both inform and engage on issues that matter across the globe.

But The World Ambassador is more than just a news magazine. At our core is a deep commitment to the spirit of diplomacy. We highlight international relations, diplomatic initiatives, and present exclusive interviews with ambassadors, policymakers, and thought leaders. Our mission is to provide readers with a unique lens into diplomacy and international cooperation, revealing how nations come together to address shared challenges and foster mutual understanding.

This issue offers a rich selection of articles covering current developments in health, society, and technology, alongside cultural insights and entertainment. Our signature diplomatic section continues to feature in-depth coverage of recent global events, ambassadorial perspectives, and stories of cultural exchange that bring countries closer together.

We hope these articles enlighten, inspire, and spark meaningful dialogue. Thank you for being part of our journey to explore diplomacy and global affairs. Your readership means the world to us, and we look forward to your continued support in broadening horizons and building bridges across borders.

Warm regards,

Wasif Ali Khan

Managing Editor

The World Ambassador

Ambassadors of Turkiye and Oman Call on Pakistan Naval Chief to Discuss Regional Security and Cooperation

By: Abid Chaudhry

The Ambassadors of Turkiye, Irfan Neziroglu, and Oman, Fahad Sulaiman, called on Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters on Monday.

According to a press release from the Directorate General Public Relations of the Pakistan Navy, discussions during the meetings focused on matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics, and avenues for enhanced bilateral cooperation.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf briefed the envoys on the Pakistan Navy's proactive initiatives to ensure regional maritime peace and stability,

particularly through the ongoing Regional Maritime Security Patrols.

Both ambassadors appreciated the Pakistan Navy's significant contributions to promoting maritime security and fostering stability in the region. They reiterated their respective countries' commitment to strengthening defence cooperation with Pakistan, aiming to deepen partnerships in regional security.

The visit of the Turkish and Omani ambassadors, the statement added, will further reinforce the close ties between the friendly nations, especially in the domain of armed forces collaboration.



Foreign Minister of Iran Meets Pakistan's Leadership to Strengthen Bilateral Ties

By: Abid Chaudhry

The Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyed Abbas Araghchi, met with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), on Monday at the General Headquarters (GHQ).

According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release, the meeting featured constructive discussions on the geo-strategic environment, focusing particularly on the shared security challenges facing both nations. The two sides also reviewed the Pak-Iran border security mechanism, emphasizing the need for enhanced bilateral coordination.

General Munir reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fostering strong ties with Iran, calling both nations "brotherly neighbors bound by shared history, culture, and religion." Both sides expressed a firm commitment to continued engagement and cooperation, especially in addressing regional challenges and promoting stability.

Later the same day, Foreign Minister Araghchi also called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr to discuss matters of mutual interest and regional security. The conversation paid particular attention to the tensions between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam incident.

Welcoming the Iranian dignitary, President Zardari emphasized the historic and fraternal relations between Pakistan and Iran. He highlighted the importance of joint efforts to promote regional peace and prosperity.

Foreign Minister Araghchi noted that his visit was undertaken at the instruction of Supreme Leader Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. He acknowledged Pakistan's stance on the evolving regional situation and urged both India and Pakistan to exercise restraint in order to de-escalate tensions.

He further underscored Iran's desire to strengthen bilateral ties, particularly in trade and economic cooperation, and expressed readiness to work closely with Pakistan on regional matters including Afghanistan.

President Zardari thanked the Iranian Foreign Minister for his timely visit and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, while voicing concern over India's aggressive posture, which he said threatens regional peace and stability. He also reaffirmed Pakistan's interest in boosting bilateral trade with Iran.

In addition, both sides condemned the ongoing Israeli atrocities in Gaza and the West Bank, expressing grave concern over continued human rights violations.

Foreign Minister Araghchi concluded the meeting by conveying the best wishes of President Masoud Pezeshkian to President Zardari.



Japanese Ambassador Akamatsu Shuichi, hosted the “Pakistan-Japan Human Resources Stakeholders Meeting in Islamabad



By: News Desk

Akamatsu Shuichi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Pakistan, hosted the “Pakistan-Japan Human Resources Stakeholders Meeting” at the Ambassador’s Residence in Islamabad. The high-level gathering brought together approximately 70 key stakeholders actively engaged in developing and facilitating Pakistani human resources for employment opportunities in Japan.

The event witnessed the presence of distinguished figures including Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Shaza Fatima, Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications, Mohammad Awn Saqlain, Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, and representatives from leading Japanese and Pakistani organizations. Major participants representatives from Plus W, Proud Partners, Japan Pakistan Innovation Institute (JPPI) and Japan Station. Also, representatives from key institutions such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) presented.

The forum centered on the growing demands for skilled Pakistani labor in Japan and explored strategies to build stronger linkages that enable the smooth deployment of qualified professionals across multiple sectors, including IT, healthcare, construction, agriculture, and manufacturing.

Ambassador Akamatsu stated in his welcome remarks as follows:

“I am confident that the success of Pakistani professionals in Japan is becoming one of the key pillars of the bilateral relations. Both Japanese and Pakistani Embassies remains committed to making contributions in this area. The evaluation of Pakistani talents in Japan is becoming higher and higher. Therefore, I expect that the demands for skilled Pakistani professionals will be expanding in the future.

Japan seeks high-quality human resources, and by engaging with Japan, young Pakistani talents will contribute significantly to strengthening the Japan-Pakistan relations.

For Pakistan, remittances are one of the major economic pillars, and the skills and knowledge Pakistani workers acquire in Japan will help to foster industrial development after returning to their home country. Please allow me to touch upon the Osaka-Kansai Expo, which has opened as of 13th of April until 13th of October, half a year. I have already had the pleasure of visiting it in the last month. More than 160 countries participate in this Expo. Among them, Pakistan Pavilion, which is consist of pink salts, is so popular among the visitors. I hope this Pakistan pavilion attracts many Japanese people and arouse their interest towards Pakistan. I would also like to encourage many Pakistani people to visit Japan on this occasion and experience the advanced and human-friendly technologies first hand.”

Minister Salik Hussain emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and Japan to help Pakistani professionals access opportunities in the Japanese corporate sector. He commended the partnership between the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) and PlusW, noting that its recent expansion under the Specified Skilled Workers (SSW) program now covers sectors beyond IT, including healthcare, construction, agriculture, and manufacturing.

Minister Shaza Fatima, Minister for IT and Telecommunications, highlighted the success of Pakistani IT companies at Japan IT Week in Tokyo (April 2025), where 15 companies secured contracts exceeding \$600,000. She called for more roadshows to showcase Pakistani tech talent in Japan and urged the development of a demand-supply matching platform to better align Pakistan’s workforce development with Japan’s needs. She also advocated for the inclusion of IT and telecommunication fields in Japan’s Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) program. Speakers from JICA, JETRO, Plus W (celebrating its 5th anniversary), Pakistani university student (with fluent Japanese and English) and OEC Pakistan also shared updates on their respective initiatives to expand workforce collaboration and strengthen the people-to-people ties.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of mutual commitment to promoting sustainable, long-term collaboration among stakeholders of Japan and Pakistan through human capital development and cross-border workforce mobility.

Bangladesh High Commission Hosts Pohela Boishakh – Bangla New Year 1432 Celebration in Islamabad

By: Adnan Hameed

The Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad hosted a vibrant celebration of Bengali New Year 1432, known as Pohela Boishakh, at the Silk Road Culture Center, located within the Sir Syed Memorial Complex. The event gathered diplomats, cultural aficionados, media persons and members of the Bangladeshi community in Pakistan, creating a colorful and meaningful occasion.

The High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Pakistan, Iqbal Hussain, officially commenced the celebration with a speech underscoring the cultural value of Pohela Boishakh—a festival that marks the start of the Bengali calendar and is joyously observed across Bangladesh with songs, dances, and traditional dress.

Speaking at the Bengali New Year celebration, High Commissioner Iqbal Hussain emphasized that Pohela Boishakh is not only a celebration of cultural identity but also a symbol of unity and renewal. “Pohela Boishakh is a time to reflect on our shared heritage and to look forward to new beginnings,” he said. He also noted a positive shift in the relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, stating, “Our ties are entering a new phase after a revolution of reform and progress in Bangladesh. The new government in Dhaka is committed to strengthening its diplomatic and cultural relations with Islamabad.”

The Chief Guest, Pakistan’s Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Ambreen Jan reflected on her personal ties to Bangladesh, recalling the six years she spent serving there during her tenure. “I hold very fond memories of my time in Bangladesh. I have witnessed the richness of its culture, the warmth of its people, and the vibrant spirit of Pohela Boishakh. It is a festival that unites people regardless of boundaries,” she said.

Guests enjoyed a wide variety of authentic Bangladeshi delicacies. The food stalls filled the venue with mouth-watering scents, offering a flavorful journey into the culinary heritage of Bangladesh.



The celebration showcased an array of cultural performances by members of the Bangladeshi community residing in Pakistan. Audiences were enthralled by traditional Bengali songs, dances, and poetry, which provided expatriates with a nostalgic connection to home and introduced local guests to the richness of Bangladeshi culture. Dressed in vibrant saris and punjabis, the performers infused the event with the lively spirit and festive atmosphere of Dhaka’s New Year celebrations, bringing a piece of Bangladesh to Islamabad.



The event became a platform for cultural connection between the two nations, encouraging mutual respect and friendship. It showcased the role of cultural celebrations in building stronger ties between communities and advancing diplomatic efforts. Looking ahead, such gatherings stand as hopeful symbols of the harmony and cooperation achievable through cultural exchange.



“Korea Meets Young Pakistan”: Korean Movie Day & Ambassador’s Park Lecture Held at NUML

By: The World Ambassador

The Department of Korean Language & Culture at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, organized “Korean Movie Day” alongside the Ambassador’s Lecture titled “Korea Meets Young Pakistan.”

Park Kijun, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The Honorable Rector of NUML commended the Embassy’s continuous support and reaffirmed NUML’s dedication to strengthening international collaboration and cultural exchange.

The event was also attended by Prof. Dr. Jamil Asghar Jami, Mr. Ahtisham Hussain, and Dr. Atif Faraz. The seminar featured a screening of a Korean film, an insightful lecture by the Ambassador, an energetic Samulnori (traditional percussion) performance by the EOLSSU Team, and a captivating vocal rendition of “Jindo Arirang.”

A large number of students participated enthusiastically in the event. The program concluded with the distribution of authentic Korean snacks, generously arranged by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea.



Ethiopian Envoy Meets ISSI DG to Discuss Strengthening Bilateral Cooperation

By: The World Ambassador

Islamabad – H.E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), paid a courtesy call on H.E. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), to discuss avenues for enhanced bilateral cooperation.

During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, with a particular focus on institutionalizing cooperation between ISSI and its Ethiopian counterpart. Discussions included the potential for joint research, scholarly exchanges, and other collaborative initiatives.

Ambassador Dr. Jemal highlighted the renewed momentum in Ethiopia-Pakistan relations, underscored by the recent opening of the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad and the commencement of Ethiopian Airlines operations in Pakistan. He noted that these developments have paved the way for robust engagements in trade, investment, aviation, science and technology, health, and education. He also briefed the ISSI DG on Ethiopia's proactive role in regional integration and Pan-Africanism, including its efforts to host international forums in Addis Ababa, share resources with neighboring countries, and promote peace and security across Africa.

Extending an invitation to the ISSI leadership, the Ambassador invited Ambassador Sohail Mahmood to visit Ethiopia during the upcoming Single Country Exhibition of Pakistan, to be held in Addis Ababa from May 15 to 17, 2025.

In response, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood welcomed the growing ties between the two countries and expressed strong interest in establishing collaboration between ISSI and Ethiopian research institutions. He also lauded the leadership of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and acknowledged Ethiopia's significant diplomatic role on the regional and global stage.



Ambassador of Iraq Meets President of Pakistan to Discuss Bilateral Cooperation and Regional Stability

By: The World Ambassador

Islamabad – May 2025: H.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lofta, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Pakistan, held a meeting with H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

During the meeting, Ambassador Lofta conveyed warm greetings on behalf of the President of Iraq, H.E. Abdel Latif Jamal Rashid, Prime Minister H.E. Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister H.E. Fouad Hussein. He expressed Iraq's keen interest in enhancing bilateral relations and expanding cooperation between the two nations.

Discussions covered a range of regional and international issues, including the current dynamics between Pakistan and India. The Ambassador stressed the importance of pursuing diplomatic solutions to regional tensions, drawing attention to the devastating consequences Iraq has endured due to past conflicts. He emphasized the value of peace and dialogue in avoiding similar tragedies.

President Zardari reaffirmed the deep-rooted and friendly ties between Iraq and Pakistan and emphasized the importance of further strengthening cooperation in areas of mutual interest. He welcomed the invitation extended by the Ambassador for an official visit to Iraq.

The meeting was also attended by Dr. Abdullah Al-Jabouri, who oversees the bilateral relations portfolio at the Iraqi Embassy in Islamabad.



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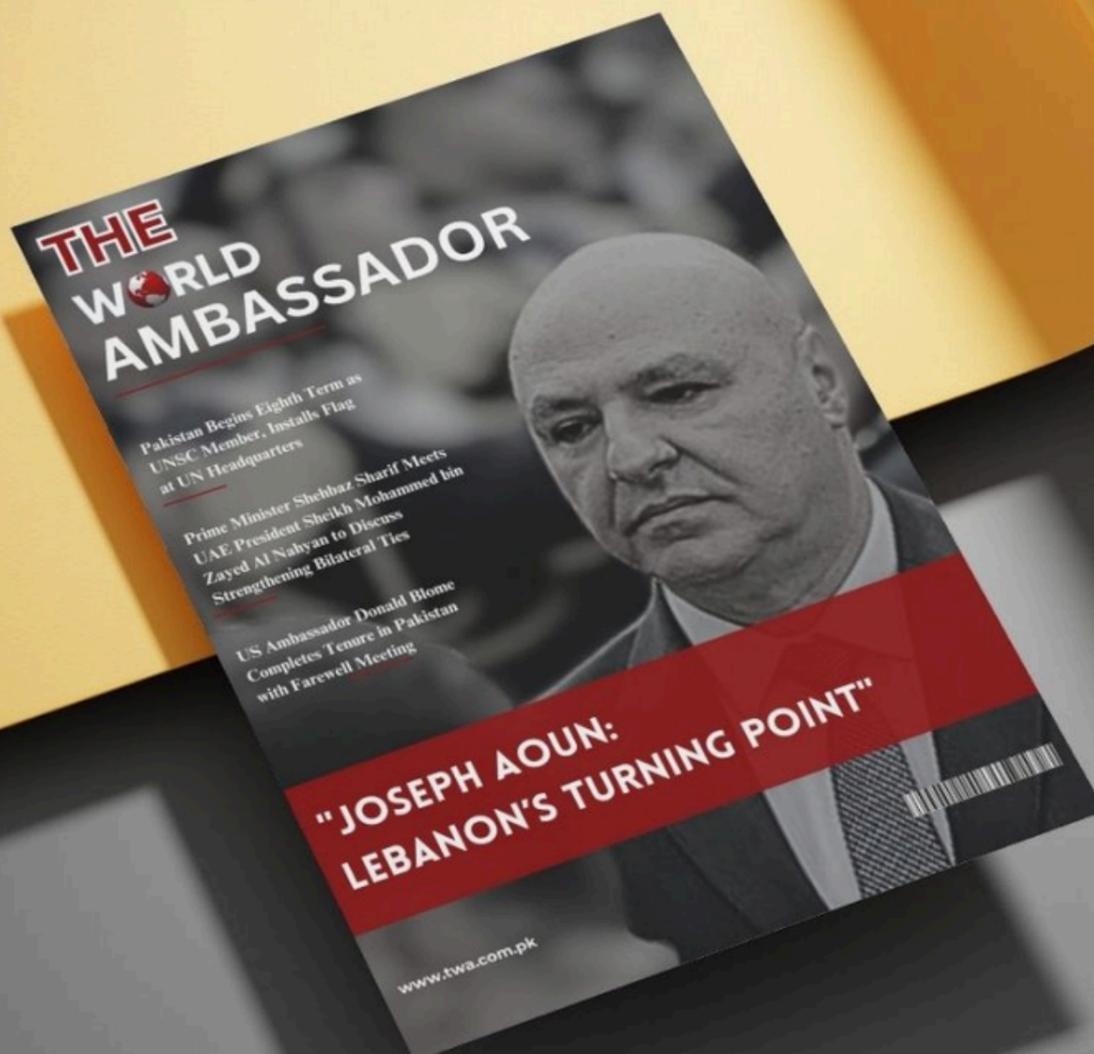
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UN Security Council Holds Emergency Session as India-Pakistan Tensions Mount

By: News Desk

The United Nations Security Council convened an emergency closed-door session on Monday afternoon amid rapidly escalating tensions between India and Pakistan that threaten international peace and security.

Diplomatic sources confirmed that the session began with a briefing by Khaled Khiari, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific. He was followed by Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN, who requested the urgent meeting.

Ahead of the 15-member Council's deliberations, UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged both nations to exercise "maximum restraint," cautioning that recent hostilities, particularly after a deadly terror attack in Kashmir, could spiral into a full-blown military confrontation.

Speaking to reporters outside the Council chambers, Guterres voiced deep concern over the deteriorating state of India-Pakistan relations, noting that tensions were "at their highest in years."

He strongly condemned the April 22 terror attack in the Pahalgam area of Jammu and Kashmir, which claimed at least 26 civilian lives and left many more injured.

"Targeting civilians is unacceptable," the Secretary-General stated. "Those responsible must be brought to justice through credible and lawful means."

Guterres emphasized the urgent need to avoid any military escalation, warning, "At this critical hour, a confrontation could easily spin out of control."

Following the conclusion of the session, Ambassador Asim is expected to deliver a statement to the press.



UN Chief Discusses South Asia Security with PM Shehbaz in Second Call Within a Week

By: Abid Chaudhry

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres spoke by phone with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday to discuss the ongoing security situation in South Asia, according to a press release from the Prime Minister's Office.

This marks the second conversation between the two leaders in less than a week.

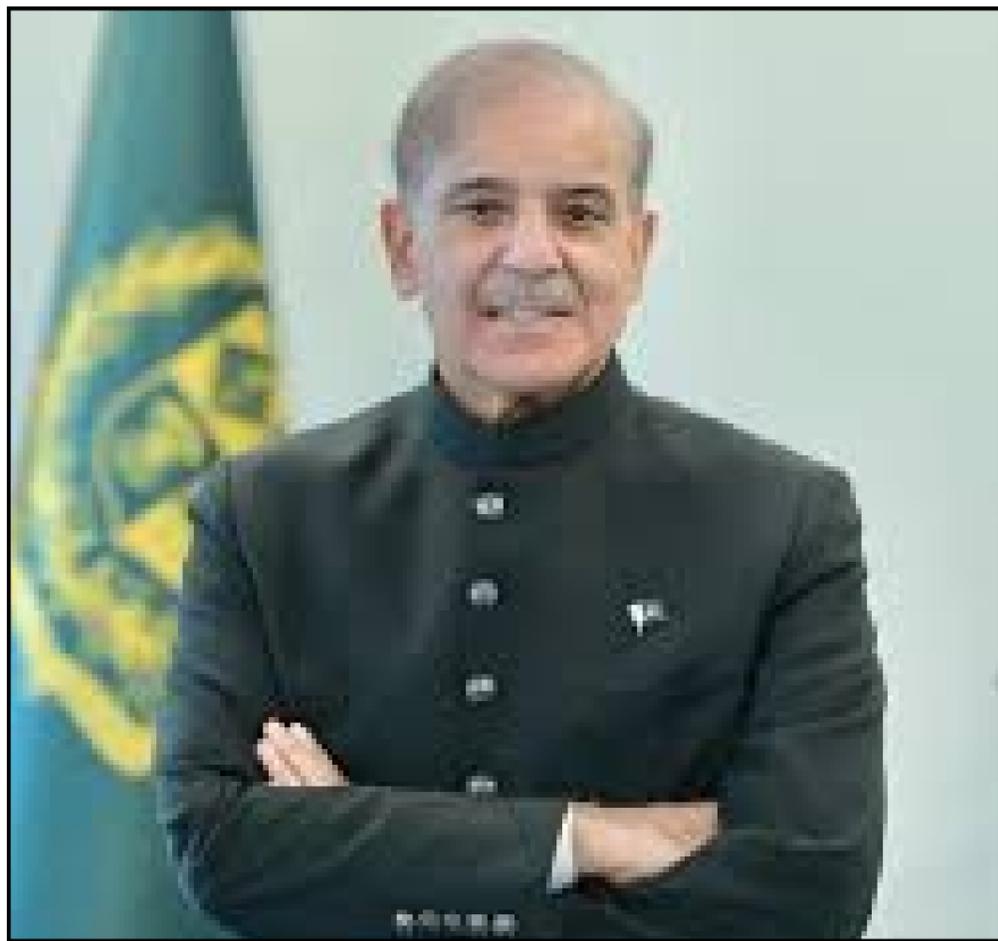
Prime Minister Shehbaz welcomed the Secretary-General's continued engagement and his calls for de-escalation and restraint, emphasizing the importance of avoiding any confrontation in the region.

Reiterating Pakistan's call for an independent, transparent, neutral, and credible investigation, the prime minister voiced concern over India's failure to provide any evidence while continuing with provocative rhetoric and warmongering.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The prime minister also expressed serious concern over India's attempts to politicize international financial institutions to damage Pakistan's economic interests.

Secretary-General Guterres updated Prime Minister Shehbaz on his diplomatic outreach for regional peace and stability, assuring him of the UN's ongoing engagement with all relevant stakeholders.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif
Received a telephone call from
UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres



Both sides discussed the prevailing security situation in South Asia.



Wang Yi Has a Phone Call with Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister **Mohammad Ishaq Dar**

By: **Abid Chaudhry**

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Telephonic Conversation

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan
Mohammad Ishaq Dar



Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China
Wang Yi



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UNESCO World Day of the Portuguese Language and of the Portuguese-Speaking Countries' Cultures

By: News Desk

Every 5th May it is celebrated the UNESCO World Portuguese Language Day and the Culture of the Lusophone Countries assembled in the CPLP (Community of Portuguese – Speaking Countries), a significant occasion highlighting the global presence, cultural richness, and unifying power of the Portuguese language.

Originally sedimented and developed in western Europe, more than one thousand years ago, the Portuguese Language is today the native language to almost 300 million people in nine countries across 4 continents, and to lusophone diasporas living in almost all the corners of the planet. One of the most globally diffused languages in the modern world, the Portuguese is the most spoken universal language in the southern hemisphere.

This World Day also celebrates the diverse and rich Cultures of the nine countries that form the CPLP (Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries), including, in Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé e Príncipe and Equatorial

Guinea, in Asia, East Timor, in America, Brazil and in Europe, Portugal.

The theme for this year's celebration “The Promotion and Dissemination of the Portuguese Language and Cultural Diversity of CPLP Member States: From Traditional Experiences to Digital Platforms” reflects the growing relevance of Portuguese in the digital age. It also highlights the need to leverage technological tools, including artificial intelligence and digital media, to preserve, teach, and promote the Portuguese language across generations and borders.

Portuguese is not only a means of communication but also a symbol of identity, memory, and shared heritage. As a pluricentric language, it reflects the diversity of its speakers and the richness of their individual experiences and national cultures. Celebrating May 5th is an opportunity to honor this diversity, strengthen linguistic and cultural ties, and look toward the future with a sense of unity and purpose.



U.S. Will Not Intervene in Pakistan-India War, Says

Vice President JD Vance

By: International Desk

U.S. Vice President JD Vance has announced that the United States will not become involved in the ongoing conflict between Pakistan and India, calling it a war "that it has nothing to do with."

In an interview with an American television channel, Vance remarked that "India attacked, and Pakistan responded," urging both nations to act with restraint and avoid escalating the situation. "The Pakistan-India war should not turn into a nuclear conflict," he warned, adding that such an outcome would bring immense devastation.

Despite ruling out military intervention, Vance emphasized that the U.S. remains concerned about the situation and supports a swift resolution through diplomatic means. "We cannot intervene in the two countries' wars, but the United States can pursue diplomacy," he stated.

Earlier on Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. According to the Prime Minister's Office, Rubio conveyed that Washington is closely monitoring developments in South Asia and remains committed to promoting peace and stability in the region.

Rubio also underscored the importance of both Pakistan and India working together to reduce tensions and avoid further escalation.



Trump Administration Moves to Shut Down Energy Star Program, Sparking Concerns Over Rising Energy Costs

By: International Desk

The Trump administration is preparing to dismantle the Energy Star program, a long-running federal initiative that has helped American households save an average of \$450 per year on energy bills. Launched in 1992 under the George H.W. Bush administration, Energy Star provides consumers with clear, standardized information about the energy efficiency of appliances, electronics, and buildings.

“If you wanted to raise families’ energy bills, getting rid of the Energy Star label would be a pretty good way,” said Steven Nadel, Executive Director of the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. Over its three-decade history, the program has saved consumers and businesses more than \$500 billion in energy costs.

The decision, reported by CNN and The Washington Post, was confirmed indirectly by EPA Associate Administrator for Public Affairs Molly Vaseliou. Although she did not comment specifically on Energy Star, she provided a future organizational chart showing the elimination of the EPA’s Office of Transportation & Air Quality and the Office of Radiation & Indoor Air Quality—two divisions responsible for administering the program.

Despite its modest annual budget of just \$32 million, Energy Star delivers outsized benefits. “For just \$32 million a year, Energy Star helps American families save over \$40 billion in annual energy costs,” said Paula Glover, president of the nonprofit Alliance to Save Energy. “That’s a return of \$350 for every federal dollar invested.”

The loss of Energy Star could have wide-ranging impacts. Without the program’s energy-use labeling, consumers may find it harder to make cost-effective appliance choices and could miss out on tax credits of up to \$3,200 annually, as well as local rebates.

Critics warn that the move could significantly undermine efforts to reduce household energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The Energy Star brand, long trusted by consumers, plays a critical role in promoting energy efficiency across industries.



Cardinal Robert Prevost Elected **Pope Leo XIV**, Becoming First U.S. Pontiff in Surprise Choice

By: International Desk

In a historic and unexpected decision, Cardinal Robert Prevost, a relatively unknown missionary from Chicago, was elected as the new leader of the Catholic Church on Thursday. Taking the name Pope Leo XIV, he becomes the first American to serve as pope and the 267th successor to St. Peter, following the death of Pope Francis last month.

The announcement was met with awe and applause in St. Peter's Square after white smoke rose from the Sistine Chapel, signaling the conclusion of the conclave. Appearing on the central balcony of the basilica, Pope Leo greeted the crowd with a brief address in Italian and Spanish, saying, "Peace be with you all," though he did not speak in English.

At 69, Pope Leo is a dual U.S.-Peruvian citizen who has spent most of his career in Peru, serving as bishop of Chiclayo and, more recently, leading the Vatican department responsible for bishop appointments worldwide. Elevated to cardinal in 2023, he was not widely seen as a leading contender, and his name reportedly sparked a moment of silence before applause broke out in the square.

President Donald Trump responded quickly, calling Leo's election a "Great Honor for our Country," and expressing eagerness to meet the new pope. Meanwhile, reactions from around the globe poured in, with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez expressing hope that Leo's pontificate would "strengthen dialogue and the defense of human rights."

Pope Leo used his inaugural remarks to express gratitude to his predecessor and affirm a continuation of Francis' vision for a more inclusive and compassionate Church. "A Church that is engaged with the modern world and always looking for peace, charity and being close to people, especially those who are suffering," he said.

Though Leo embraced more traditional papal attire than Francis—donning the red mozzetta over his white cassock—he is known for a quiet, pastoral approach and commitment to social justice. Sister Barbara Reid, president of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago where Leo earned his master's in 1982, praised him as "intellectually brilliant" with "an extraordinarily compassionate heart."

The name Leo recalls Pope Leo XIII, who led the Church from 1878 to 1903 and laid the groundwork for modern Catholic social teaching. Observers see symbolism in that connection, suggesting Pope Leo XIV may prioritize justice, dialogue, and care for the marginalized.

Jesuit commentator Rev. Thomas Reese summarized the surprise of many: "Most of us thought a U.S. cardinal would never become pope. But Prevost got strong support from cardinals from Latin America, where he worked for 20 years. The Holy Spirit continues to surprise us."



Dozens of Columbia University Students Arrested in Pro-Palestinian Library Occupation

By: International Desk



In one of the most significant campus protests since last year's demonstrations over the war in Gaza, New York police arrested dozens of Columbia University students on Wednesday after they seized part of Butler Library in a pro-Palestinian action.

The demonstration, organized by student activists, resulted in the arrest of at least 40 to 50 students, who were led away in zip-tie handcuffs and loaded into NYPD vans and buses. The arrests followed a request from Columbia officials, who said the protesters were trespassing in the library's main second-floor reading room.

Social media footage showed masked demonstrators beating drums, chanting, and unfurling banners with slogans such as "Strike for Gaza" and "Liberated Zone" under the chandeliers of the historic Lawrence A. Wein Reading Room.

The protest escalated when university public safety staff locked the library's doors, preventing further entry and prompting shoving and a brief scuffle outside. At least one student was injured, and another was removed on a stretcher. The NYPD later confirmed "multiple arrests," though an exact count has not been released.

Columbia stated that two public safety officers were injured during the standoff and reiterated its policy of opposing violence while recognizing the right to peaceful protest. "Everyone has the right to peacefully protest. But violence, vandalism or destruction of property are completely unacceptable," said New York Governor Kathy Hochul.

Columbia University Apartheid Divest, a coalition of student groups, reiterated long-standing demands that the university divest its \$14.8 billion endowment from arms manufacturers and companies linked to Israel's military operations.

The university continues to navigate intense political pressure. President Donald Trump previously condemned Columbia's campus protests as antisemitic and accused the school of failing to protect Jewish students. In March, his administration cut hundreds of millions of dollars in research grants to the university, a move Columbia is currently negotiating to reverse.

Critics, including student organizers—some of them Jewish—argue that equating pro-Palestinian advocacy with antisemitism is misleading and suppresses free speech. The university maintains it is committed to combating antisemitism and other forms of discrimination, while also protecting academic freedom.

This week's incident follows similar actions nationwide. On Monday, University of Washington students occupied a campus building, demanding divestment from Boeing over its Israeli military contracts. Thirty-four protesters were arrested there, and 21 students have since been suspended and banned from all university campuses.

Columbia was a flashpoint in last year's wave of pro-Palestinian demonstrations across U.S. campuses, spurred by the intensifying conflict in Gaza that began in 2023.

Maldives President Muizzu Breaks Record with Nearly 15-Hour Press Conference



By: International Desk

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has set what his office claims is a new world record for the longest press conference by a head of state, speaking to journalists for nearly 15 hours on Saturday. The marathon session, which began at 10:00 a.m. local time and concluded just before 1:00 a.m. Sunday, lasted 14 hours and 54 minutes, surpassing the previous record set by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in 2019.

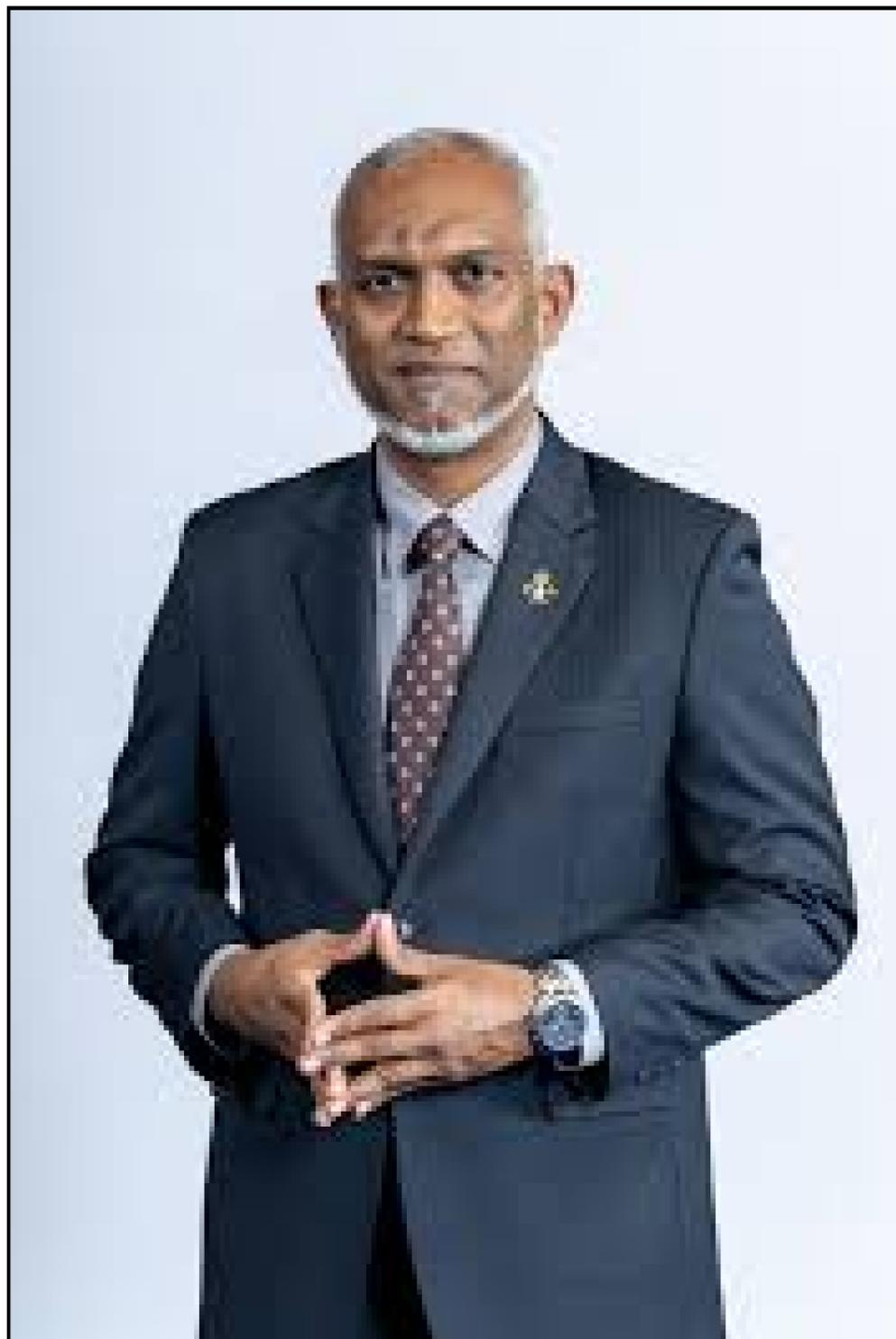
According to a statement from the president's office, the event coincided with World Press Freedom Day and included brief breaks for prayers. Muizzu fielded questions from both journalists and members of the public who submitted queries through the media. The government emphasized that the event aimed to celebrate press freedom and promote transparency.

"He acknowledged the crucial role of the press in society and emphasised the importance of factual, balanced, and impartial reporting," the statement said.

Muizzu, 46, came to power in 2023 and has since emphasized openness in governance. His press conference also marked the Maldives' improved ranking in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index, where the country rose two places to 104th out of 180 nations.

Approximately two dozen reporters attended the extended session, where they were provided with meals as the president addressed a wide range of domestic and international topics.

The Maldives has a history of unconventional political events. In 2009, then-President Mohamed Nasheed made headlines by holding the world's first underwater cabinet meeting to draw attention to the existential threat that climate change and rising sea levels pose to the island nation.



Easter – The Resurrection of Christ: A Day of Victory, Life, and Salvation

By: **Shahbaz M Naar**

Easter, also known as Resurrection Day, is a joyous and sacred occasion celebrated by Christians around the world. It marks the miraculous resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead — a day of triumph, fulfillment of divine promises, and the assurance of eternal life.

This day is known by many names: Resurrection Day, Victory over Death, Day of New Life, and Day of Joy. It fulfills the covenant of God declared in both the Old and New Testaments. The resurrection was not a random event but a divine plan — a promise from God to humanity that was gloriously fulfilled.

Interestingly, even in the Holy Qur'an, there is a reference that resonates with the message of resurrection:

"And peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive."

(Surah Maryam, 19:33)

Before His crucifixion, Jesus shared with His disciples that it was necessary for the Son of Man to suffer, be handed over, crucified, and on the third day, rise again. This was God's redemptive plan — His covenant — which had to be fulfilled.

The cross, once a mere instrument of execution, became an eternal symbol of forgiveness, redemption, love, sacrifice, suffering, victory, and submission.

As the Scriptures say:

"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God."

(1 Corinthians 1:18)

On the cross, Jesus spoke seven final sayings, each filled with profound meaning and eternal truth:

1. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)
2. He turned hatred into love and opened the door of forgiveness.
3. "Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)
4. He declared His authority and promised eternal life.
5. "Woman, here is your son."
6. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"
7. "I thirst."
8. "It is finished."
9. "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit."

Jesus forgave those who crucified Him — Roman soldiers, chief priests, religious leaders, and the crowds — revealing the depth of divine mercy.

The Bible says:

"Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died —more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God..."

(Romans 8:34)

Jesus boldly proclaimed:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life."

He conquered death, fulfilling the prophecy:

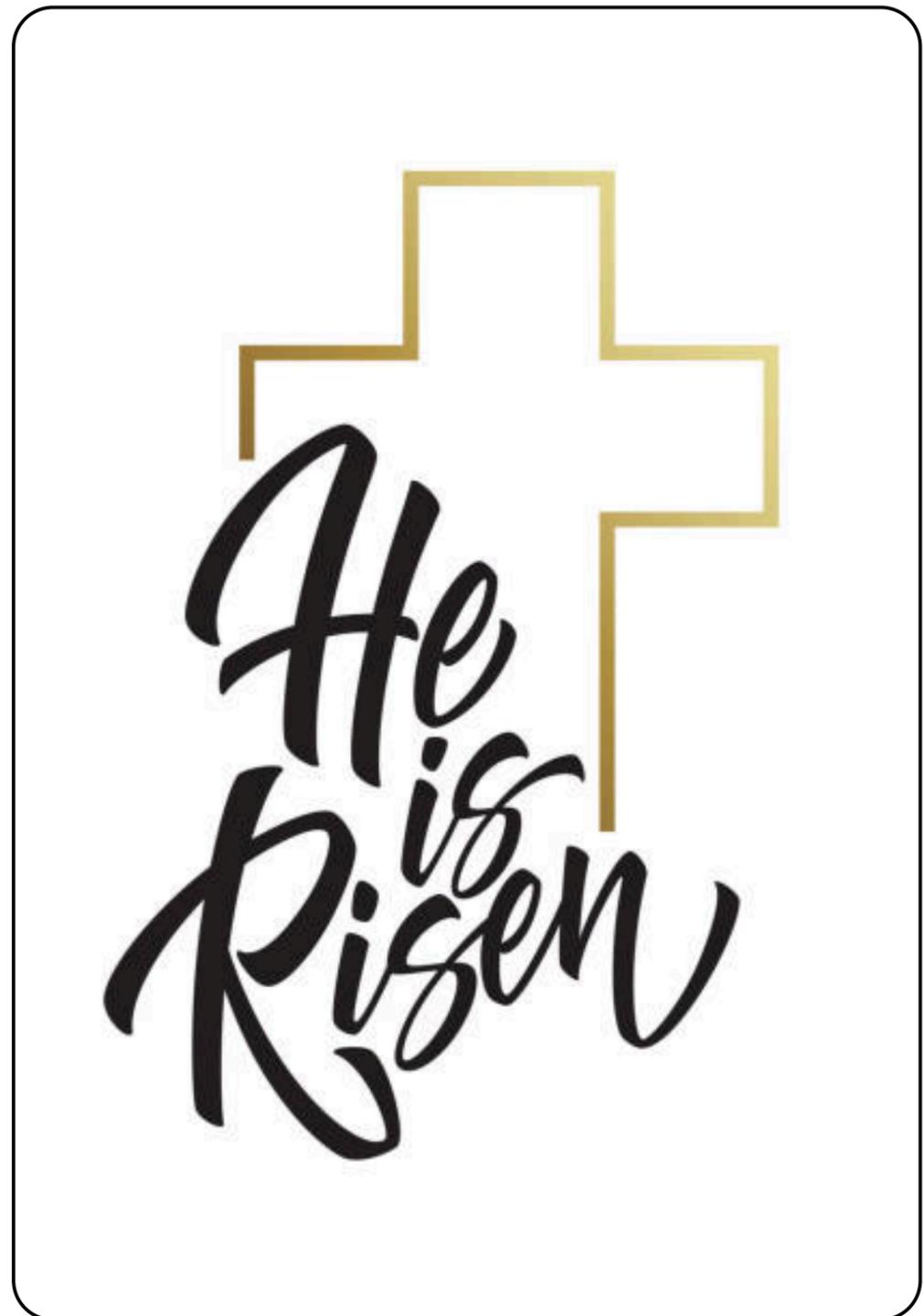
"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

(1 Corinthians 15:55)

Through His resurrection, He offered the gift of eternal life and deliverance from sin to all who believe.

Happy Easter!

May the power of the risen Christ fill your life with peace, joy, hope, and eternal blessings. Amen.



Behind the Ceasefire: Inside the High-Stakes Diplomacy That Halted India-Pakistan Escalation

By: News Desk

CNN's Nick Robertson has revealed new details on how a fragile ceasefire between India and Pakistan was brokered, following a brief but intense military confrontation and critical diplomatic maneuvers behind closed doors.

Citing a source directly involved in the negotiations, Robertson reports that the ceasefire had been quietly in progress for nearly 48 hours, with Pakistan halting its military activity to allow diplomacy to take root. That fragile truce shattered when India launched surprise airstrikes on three Pakistani airbases, including one near the capital.

In retaliation, Pakistan unleashed what was described as a "relentless and massive barrage" of missiles and rockets targeting Indian airbases, military installations, weapons depots, and positions along the volatile Line of Control in Kashmir.

Robertson's source emphasized that Pakistan's coordination with U.S. Secretary Rubio during this critical period was instrumental. Islamabad believes that the scale and swiftness of its counterattack caught New Delhi off guard, prompting India to urgently seek a diplomatic way out.

According to the Pakistani narrative, India reached out to Rubio, as well as Saudi and Turkish intermediaries, to mediate a ceasefire. Yet, Pakistani officials claimed that despite India's pledges to halt hostilities, rocket fire from the Indian side persisted throughout the day.



BREAKING NEWS

PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS PAKISTAN AND INDIA HAVE AGREED TO CEASEFIRE

LIVE

CNN

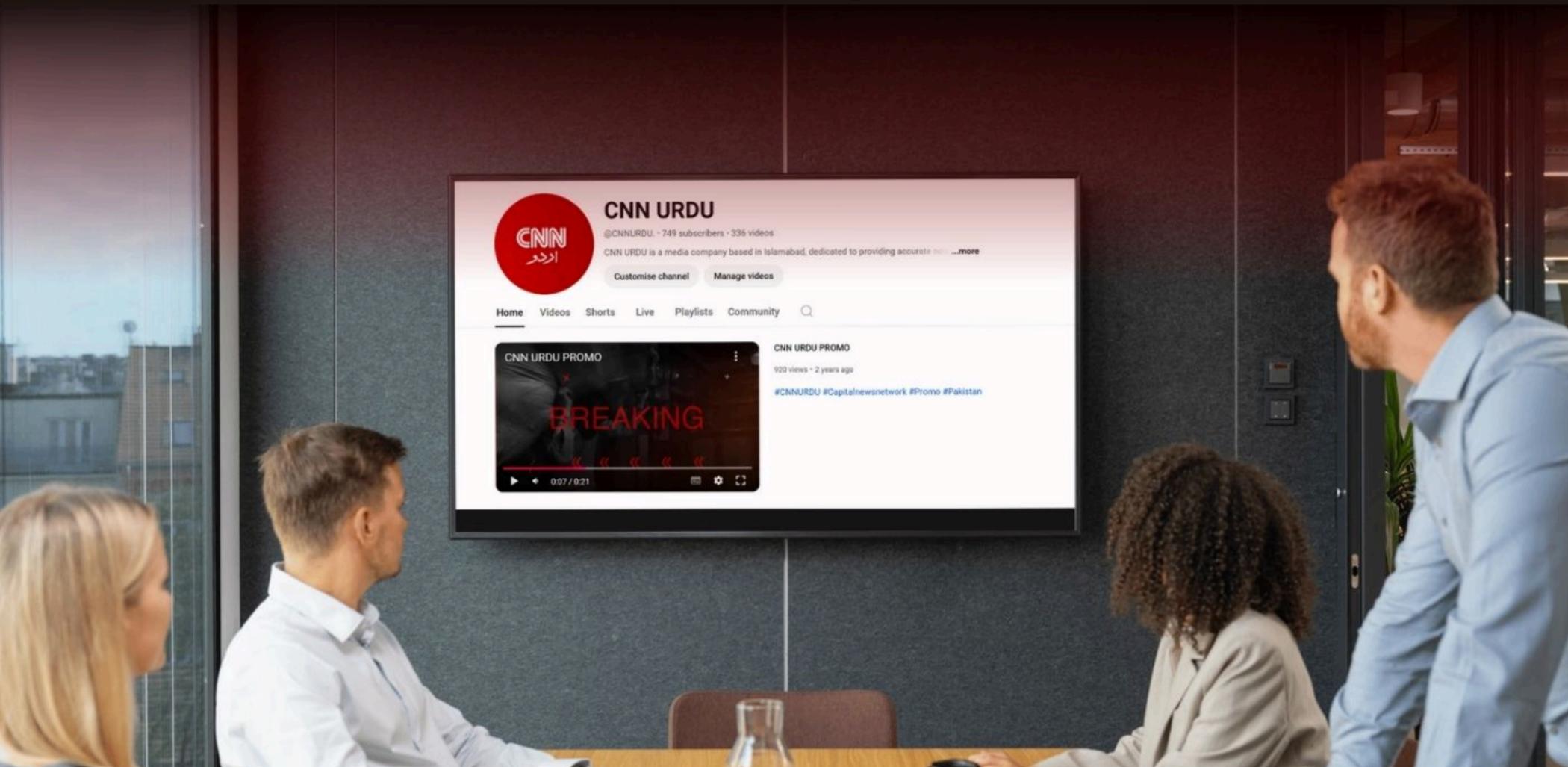
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TRUMP'S FIRST TERM AND BUILT DEEP RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEADERS IN THE REGION, SMERCONISH

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PM Shehbaz Briefs President Zardari on Operation Bunyan-al-Marsous, Response to Indian Aggression

By: News Desk

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday at Aiwan-e-Sadr to brief him on the Indian aggression and Pakistan's robust response through Operation Bunyan-al-Marsous.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, along with Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, were also present during the meeting, according to a press release from the President's Office.

President Zardari praised the Armed Forces for their exceptional professionalism and bravery in delivering a strong and effective response to India's unprovoked missile attacks.

He underscored that Pakistan, as a peace-loving and responsible nation, had shown remarkable restraint in the face of repeated Indian provocations. However, he expressed regret that India's continued belligerence compelled Pakistan to take decisive action in defense of its sovereignty and to ensure the safety of its citizens.

The President reiterated that the Pakistani nation stands firmly united with its Armed Forces and remains committed to protecting the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity at all costs.



Pakistani Pilgrims Attend 721st Urs of Hazrat

Ameer Khusro in Delhi

By: Nasir Ali Khan

A 178-member Pakistani delegation, led by Muhammad Riaz (Section Officer) and Muhammad Irfan Khan (Assistant) from Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, visited the shrine of Hazrat Ameer Khusro in Delhi to participate in the 721st Urs of the revered Sufi saint.

As part of the Urs rituals, the delegation presented a chadar (sacred cloth) at the dargah—an expression of devotion deeply rooted in Sufi tradition. The annual Urs honors the legacy of Hazrat Ameer Khusro, a 13th-century poet, scholar, and spiritual icon associated with the Chishti Sufi order and the esteemed Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.

Pakistan's High Commissioner in New Delhi, Saad Ahmad Warraich, also attended the event, which attracted a large gathering of devotees. The ceremony highlighted Khusro's enduring influence on Sufi music, poetry, and Indo-Islamic heritage.

The delegation concluded its visit after completing the spiritual observances in accordance with established protocols.



Pakistan Issues Firm Statement Following Ceasefire with India, Highlights Responsible Retaliation and Regional Peace Concerns

By: News Desk



Pakistan's Foreign Office issued a comprehensive statement on Saturday following a ceasefire agreement with India, reached within hours of Pakistan's retaliatory action in response to unprovoked Indian aggression.

"Pakistan and India have agreed to reach a ceasefire understanding. However, it is important to put the relevant developments in the right perspective," the statement emphasized.

The Foreign Office clarified that Pakistan's response was a legitimate act of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, following India's firing of BrahMos missiles over multiple Pakistani territories in blatant violation of Pakistan's sovereignty. In response, Pakistan launched Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos.

The statement strongly condemned India's missile and drone strikes conducted between May 7 and 10, which led to significant civilian casualties, including women, children, and the elderly, and caused widespread damage to infrastructure, including religious sites. Pakistan described these actions as unlawful, indiscriminate, and a serious threat to regional peace.

According to the statement, India escalated tensions further by deploying waves of loitering munitions and drones across Pakistan, including in Islamabad, targeting both civilian and military sites and sowing panic among the population. Despite these provocations, Pakistan maintained strategic restraint, opting for a precise, proportionate, and calibrated military response, aimed solely at Indian facilities involved in the aggression.

The Foreign Office confirmed that Indian airbases, which launched the attacks on Pakistan, were among the key targets, and that irrefutable evidence has been shared with the international community to support Pakistan's position.

The statement warned of the dangerous implications of continued hostilities between two nuclear-armed states, urging the international community to adopt a holistic understanding of the regional context, particularly the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, which lies at the heart of enduring instability in South Asia.

"The negative impact of geopolitical competition in the region has exacerbated conflict dynamics," the statement said, urging global stakeholders not to view South Asia's security challenges through simplistic or unilateral lenses.

It also highlighted how Cold War legacies and external interventions destabilized the region, transforming once-progressive societies into zones of conflict. Despite such challenges, Pakistan emerged resilient, playing a vital role in the global fight against terrorism, particularly after 9/11.

The statement accused India of exploiting Pakistan's focus on counterterrorism efforts by intensifying hybrid warfare and sponsoring terrorism through proxies to destabilize the country. It warned that such tactics aim to keep Pakistan distracted from development and national renewal.

It further criticized India's recurring attempts to label Pakistan as the "epicenter" of terrorism whenever the country makes significant progress in eliminating extremist threats. This recurring narrative, the statement asserted, must end.

Pakistan also condemned India's strategy of externalizing its internal issues, particularly resistance movements in Kashmir, while internalizing international issues such as the Kashmir dispute, and using terrorism as a policy tool to justify controversial actions like the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy and stalling the Indus Waters Treaty.

Calling for constructive diplomacy and comprehensive dialogue, the statement reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to peaceful conflict resolution, including on the Jammu and Kashmir issue. It appealed to the international community to restrain India from further provocative actions and support peace efforts.

"All elements of Pakistan's national power remain committed to safeguarding the country's sovereignty and vital national interests," the statement concluded. "The Armed Forces are duty-bound to defend the motherland and its citizens — a sacred trust given by the resilient and honorable people of Pakistan."

In closing, the Foreign Office stressed that Pakistan's measured and responsible military response demonstrated its commitment to peace. It warned that any further escalation between the two nuclear powers would carry catastrophic consequences for the entire region and beyond.

Pakistan Downs 77 Indian Drones

By: News Desk

Pakistan's Armed Forces have successfully shot down 77 Indian drones, many of them Israeli-made, amid heightened tensions and continued Indian aggression.

According to security sources, 29 Indian drones were neutralized by last evening, with an additional 48 drones destroyed overnight, bringing the total to 77. The Pakistan Army continues to mount a firm and effective response to hostile incursions.

Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, confirmed that Pakistan's air defense systems are vigilantly tracking and targeting Indian drones, including small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), through continuous radar surveillance and well-defined operational protocols.

"All drones entering Pakistani airspace are under constant observation," he said, emphasizing that strict engagement rules are applied, especially near civilian populations and commercial air corridors.

Security officials revealed that at least six Harop drones, Israeli-manufactured loitering munitions used by India, were shot down in Vehari, Pakpattan, and Okara—one each in Vehari and Pakpattan, and four in Okara. This brought the confirmed tally of downed drones in these areas to 35.

The successful interception of Harop drones has been described as a testament to the efficacy of Pakistan's military infrastructure in defending its territorial integrity.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar, also confirmed via a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter) that another Harop drone was downed in Bahawalnagar, praising the alertness of Pakistan's air defense:

"Pakistan Air Defence has successfully shot down another Harop drone in Bahawalnagar. Alhamdulillah," he wrote.

Meanwhile, security sources have categorically rejected Indian media claims that Pakistan launched attacks on Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). These claims were dismissed as fabricated and baseless, designed to mislead the global community.

"There is no credibility to these concocted narratives," the sources stated, asserting that India is spreading disinformation to justify its recent missile and drone attacks on Pakistani territory.

On May 7, in response to Indian aggression, Pakistan Armed Forces shot down five Indian Air Force (IAF) jets, a combat drone, and destroyed brigade headquarters and multiple checkpoints along the Line of Control (LoC), as confirmed by DG ISPR Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry.



PSL CEO Contacts Franchises Amid Uncertainty Over Resumption of PSL 10 Matches

By: News Desk

Chief Executive Officer of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), Salman Naseer, has reached out to franchise representatives to collect updates on the current whereabouts and availability of players ahead of the resumption of PSL 10, ARY News reported.

According to sources, Naseer has formally requested all PSL franchises to provide detailed reports on their team members' locations and participation status to aid in finalizing plans for the remaining fixtures.

As of now, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has not announced a new schedule for the remaining matches. The resumption plan hinges on logistical considerations, security dynamics, and confirmation of player availability, both domestic and international.

The PCB is reportedly in close coordination with franchises to align plans for the remainder of the tournament, which was suspended earlier due to escalating tensions with India.

On Friday, the PCB officially postponed the remaining games of PSL 10 following increased hostilities along the Line of Control (LoC) and drone and missile attacks by India.

In its statement, the Board said the decision was taken based on the advice of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, who emphasized that national focus should remain on the armed forces and the country's defense amid Indian aggression.

“The decision to postpone has been taken pursuant to advice received from the Prime Minister... who has kept in view the reckless aggression from India that has escalated to a point where national attention and sentiments are rightly focused on the courageous efforts of the Armed Forces of Pakistan,” the PCB noted.

The PCB expressed appreciation for the support of PSL franchises, players, broadcasters, and sponsors, acknowledging the unifying spirit of cricket but affirming that a respectful pause was necessary during such a critical national moment.

“Cricket, while being a unifying force and a source of joy, must take a respectful pause when the country is facing such callous opposition,” the Board stated.

Highlighting concerns for the mental well-being of local and foreign players, the PCB said it fully understood the apprehensions of players and their families, many of whom expressed a desire to return home amid rising security concerns.

The postponement came shortly after reports emerged that the remaining PSL 10 matches were being considered for relocation to the UAE, following India's drone attack on Rawalpindi, a key PSL venue.



Uncertainty Surrounds **Messi's** Future at Inter **Miami** as Contract Talks Stall

By: News Desk

Contract negotiations between Lionel Messi and Inter Miami have reportedly hit a standstill, raising serious questions about the Argentine icon's future with the Major League Soccer (MLS) club beyond the current season.

According to Jose Armando of Claro Sports, there is now only a 50% chance that Messi will continue with Inter Miami after his current deal expires. The 36-year-old superstar joined the club in 2023 on a 2.5-year contract, which is set to run through December 2025.

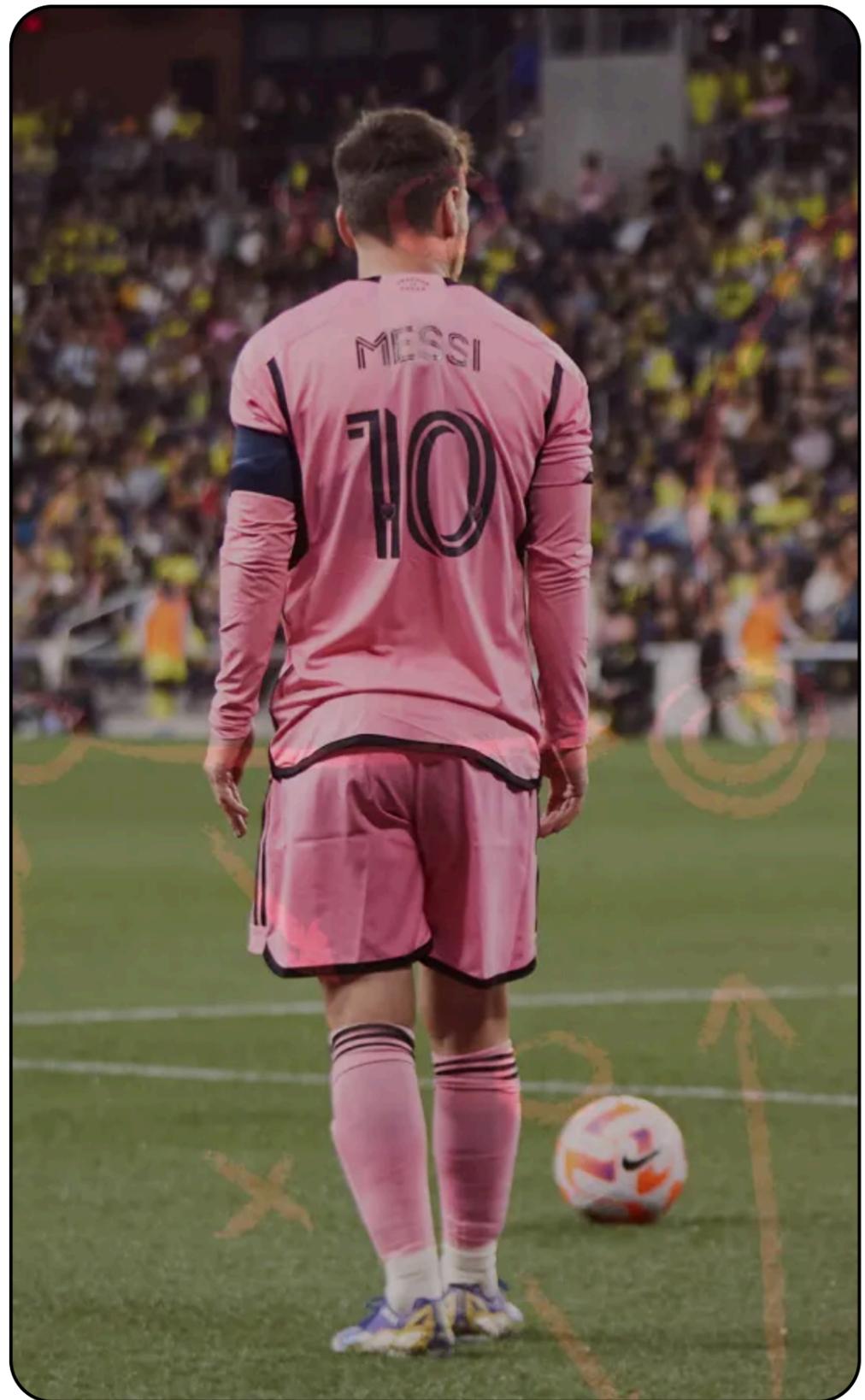
Messi's agreement includes lucrative commercial arrangements with Apple and Adidas, pushing his annual earnings close to \$60 million, with guaranteed compensation of around \$20.5 million per season.

Despite previous optimism from Inter Miami co-owner Jorge Mas, who stated in April that he was confident a contract extension would be finalized "in two to three months," no formal agreement has materialized. Mas had also shared his ambition to see Messi play at Miami Freedom Park, the club's future home, when it opens in 2026.

Although Messi had earlier hinted that Inter Miami could be the final stop of his career, recent reports paint a picture of growing uncertainty. Sources close to the situation suggest that no significant progress has been made in talks, leaving open the possibility of an early departure or a shift in career direction.

Adding to the complexity, contract discussions have also stalled for other senior players on the roster, including Jordi Alba, Luis Suárez, and Sergio Busquets—all of whom share strong personal and professional ties with Messi.

As the 2025 MLS season looms, Messi's eventual decision is expected to significantly shape both Inter Miami's trajectory and the broader commercial and sporting landscape of soccer in the United States.



India Denies Visas to Pakistan Men's Hockey Team for Asia Cup 2025

By: News Desk



India has refused to issue visas to the Pakistan men's hockey team for the upcoming Asia Hockey Cup 2025, scheduled to be held in Rajgir, India, during August and September, according to media reports.

The tournament is a crucial qualifying event for the 2026 Hockey World Cup. The decision comes amid heightened diplomatic tensions between the two countries following the Pahalgam incident. While the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) has yet to comment on the matter, Indian authorities are reportedly firm on their decision.

So far, Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has not submitted a formal complaint regarding the tournament schedule or visa denial. However, if Pakistan presents a strong and well-articulated case, there remains a possibility that the event could be relocated to a neutral venue.

Pakistan's track record in the Asia Cup is highly commendable. The national team has participated in 11 out of 12 editions—the most by any team—and has been crowned champion three times.

It is also worth noting that Pakistan has recently been excluded from other international events, such as the Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament, raising concerns about growing isolation in international competitions.

As of now, the PHF has not issued an official statement regarding India's refusal to grant visas. The coming days will be crucial in determining whether sports diplomacy or intervention by international federations can salvage Pakistan's participation in the tournament.





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Pakistani Boxer **Shaheer Afridi** Returns Home After Defeating Indian Rival in Thailand

By: News Desk

Pakistani boxer Shaheer Afridi, who defeated traditional rival Tarlochan Singh Bawa in a Pakistan-India boxing bout held in Thailand, has returned to the country to a hero's welcome.

Upon his arrival at Karachi Airport, Afridi was greeted with a warm and celebratory reception. The atmosphere echoed with chants of "Pakistan Zindabad" as supporters adorned him with flower garlands and showered him with petals.

Prominent figures present to receive him included Provincial Ministers Syed Nasir Hussain Shah and Saeed Ghani, Sindh Assembly member Asif Musa, Chairman of Chanesar Town Farhan Ghani, DIG Azfar Mahesar, SSP Ali Raza, and others.

Shaheer Afridi secured his victory by technically knocking out Indian boxer Tarlochan Singh Bawa in the fourth round. Bawa had already shown signs of struggling in the third round, and the referee stopped the match in the fourth due to his deteriorating condition, awarding the win to Afridi.

This was Shaheer Afridi's 18th fight in the middleweight category. With this triumph, the Sindh Police commando has now been ranked among the top 50 boxers in the world.

So far, Afridi has competed in 18 bouts, securing 16 victories, suffering 1 loss, and drawing 1 match. His Indian opponent, Bawa, had been undefeated in professional boxing until this match.



Pakistani Female Boxer **Aaliya Somroo** Shines on the International Stage

By: News Desk

Pakistan's success in international boxing continues, as female boxer Aaliya Somroo has made the nation proud with her latest victory.

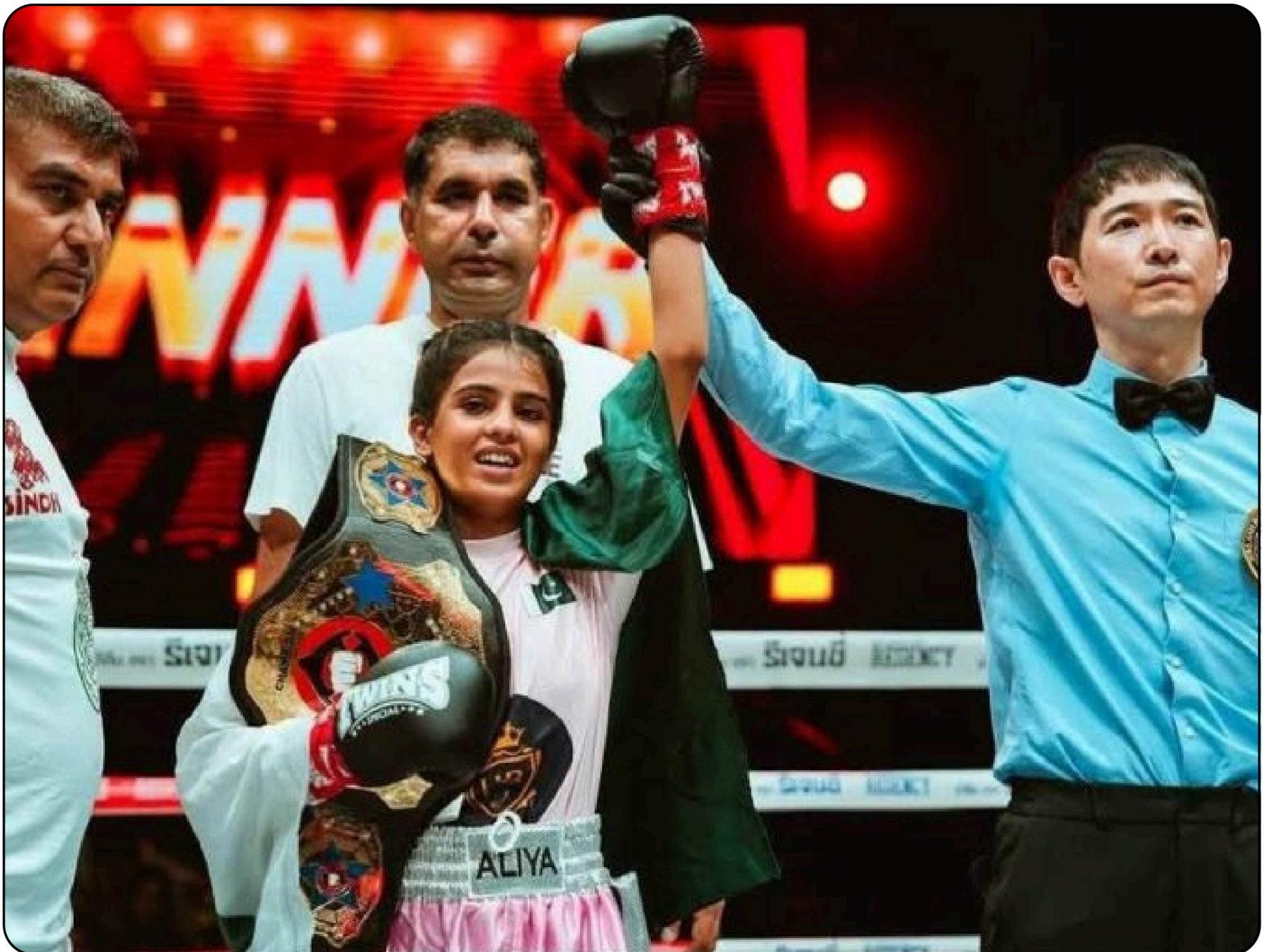
Hailing from Lyari, Karachi, Aaliya Somroo secured a remarkable win by knocking out Thai boxer Sothida Kanayanoch in a professional boxing bout held in Bangkok, Thailand.

The match, organized by TL Boxing Promotions, took place at the World Siam Stadium. Aaliya dominated the 10-round fight, winning by knockout in the fourth round.

Representing the Kalakot area of Lyari, Aaliya competed in the WBA Asia 105-pound category. She has previously won multiple international bouts and continues to elevate Pakistan's presence in the world of women's boxing.

Aaliya is now set to face an Indian female boxer in a challenge bout this August. Speaking after her victory, she said:

“This win has boosted my confidence. With the prayers and support of the nation, I will do my best to defeat the Indian boxer and bring more pride to my country.”



WWE Star Seth Rollins Sparks Buzz by Wearing Pakistani-Made Coat

By: News Desk

World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) superstar Seth Rollins is making headlines after donning a stunning Pakistani-designed overcoat during his recent ring entrance.

According to media reports, the luxurious garment, known as the “Golden Peacock”, was created by the Pakistani fashion brand Rastah. The deep blue velvet coat, adorned with intricate dabka embroidery—a traditional South Asian hand-embroidery art—has drawn widespread attention for its craftsmanship and cultural richness.

The coat reportedly costs around \$13,500 USD, which is over PKR 3.78 million, and was specially made on a custom order basis.

Rastah shared photos of Seth Rollins wearing the coat on their official social media, proudly showcasing the crossover between Pakistani heritage and global pop culture.



Pakistan to Host High-Level Conference “Beyond the Plastic Waste” on World Environment Day 2025

By: Abid Chaudhry

As the world turns its attention to the mounting crisis of plastic pollution on World Environment Day 2025, Pakistan is stepping into the spotlight with a high-level national conference titled “Beyond the Plastic Waste,” scheduled for June 3. The event is being organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and its partners, and aims to spark a much-needed national dialogue on the country’s escalating plastic waste problem.

Held in conjunction with global celebrations themed around ending plastic pollution, this conference will bring together environmental experts, policymakers, corporate leaders, and civil society to explore actionable solutions. Key panel discussions will focus on topics such as:

- “Plastic Waste: From Pollution to Solution”
- “Single-Use Plastics: Sustainable Alternatives”
- “The Waste Business: Recycling and Resource Management”

Adding a celebratory yet serious note to the proceedings, the event will also host the Pakistan Environmental Awards, recognizing impactful contributions from corporate sustainability initiatives, NGOs, and media professionals who are leading the charge in environmental advocacy.

A Growing Crisis

Pakistan is grappling with a plastic pollution crisis of alarming proportions. According to environmental experts, the country generates 3.9 million tonnes of plastic waste annually, with a staggering 70% of it mismanaged—either dumped in open landfills, incinerated in open air, or flushed into rivers and canals. The Indus River alone transports over 164,000 tonnes of plastic into the Arabian Sea each year, placing it among the most polluted rivers in the world.

“This isn’t just a pollution issue; it’s a public health and economic crisis,” said Munir Ahmed, Executive Director of Devcom-Pakistan. “Microplastics are making their way into our soil, our rivers, and even into human bodies. World Environment Day 2025 calls for urgent, collective action.”

Policy Efforts and Challenges

Pakistan has taken initial steps to address the issue through legislative measures like the Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations (2023) and environmental initiatives such as the “Living Indus Initiative,” which envisions zero plastic waste cities. However, weak enforcement, limited public awareness, and lack of systemic infrastructure continue to obstruct real progress.

Ahmed stressed that while policies are in place, they are insufficient without on-the-ground execution and citizen participation. “We need systemic change—including improved waste collection systems, accessible recycling infrastructure, and a national push toward biodegradable alternatives.”

Looking Ahead

The conference is particularly timely as it precedes upcoming

international negotiations on the UN global plastic treaty, a landmark effort aimed at curbing plastic waste across the world. Hosted by the Republic of Korea, this year’s World Environment Day theme is a call to “Beat Plastic Pollution,” a message that Devcom-Pakistan seeks to amplify through this national gathering. “We must seize this moment to redefine how we produce, consume, and dispose of plastics,” Ahmed concluded. “By beating plastic pollution, we secure a healthier future—not just for the environment, but for every citizen.”

The “Beyond the Plastic Waste” conference aims not just to highlight the problem, but to catalyze real change. In doing so, Pakistan hopes to position itself as a regional leader in environmental responsibility and global cooperation.



Second Child Dies as Measles Outbreak Grows in U.S., 642 Cases Confirmed

By: News Desk

A second child has died amid the United States' worst measles outbreak in years, health officials confirmed Sunday, as the number of confirmed infections rises to 642 across 22 states.

"We are deeply saddened to report that a school-aged child who was recently diagnosed with measles has passed away," said Aaron Davis, vice president of UMC Health System in Texas. The child had been hospitalized with complications from measles, was not vaccinated, and had no underlying health conditions, Davis added. The highly contagious viral disease, once nearly eliminated in the U.S., has made a disturbing comeback, driven largely by declining vaccination rates. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 97% of those infected had not received the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine.

Federal Response Amid Public Concern

The outbreak has prompted federal health authorities to increase their response. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has faced criticism for past anti-vaccine rhetoric, sought to reassure the public on Sunday by reaffirming the importance of immunization.

"The most effective way to prevent the spread of measles is the MMR vaccine," Kennedy wrote on X (formerly Twitter), adding that both HHS and the CDC are coordinating efforts to expand vaccine distribution, particularly in hard-hit states like Texas.

Kennedy said he had traveled to Texas to offer condolences to the family of the deceased child and reported 499 confirmed cases in Texas alone.

President Donald Trump, when questioned aboard Air Force One, described the outbreak as "so far a fairly small number of people," but acknowledged that if it worsens, "we'll have to take action very strongly," without elaborating further.

A Growing Health Emergency

The CDC reports cases spanning from Alaska to Florida, with several clusters in New York City and other densely populated areas. In addition to the two child deaths in Texas, the CDC confirmed that an adult in New Mexico also died from measles-related complications last month—marking the first measles fatalities in the U.S. in nearly a decade.

As of April 3, 2025:

- 196 cases involved children under age five
- 240 cases were in those aged 5–19
- 159 cases were adults aged 20 or older
- 93% of current cases are linked to six active outbreaks

For comparison, the CDC documented 16 outbreaks in 2024, when a total of 285 cases were reported.

"This unfortunate event underscores the critical importance of vaccination," said Davis of UMC Health. "We urge all individuals to stay current with their vaccines to protect themselves and the broader community."

With the measles virus spreading rapidly, public health officials continue to call for urgent vaccination efforts to prevent further loss of life.



Colombia Declares Nationwide Health Emergency

Amid Yellow Fever Outbreak

By: News Desk

The Colombian government declared a nationwide health emergency late Wednesday following a surge in yellow fever cases, raising alarm across public health agencies.

Health Minister Guillermo Alfonso Jaramillo confirmed that 74 cases of yellow fever have been recorded since the beginning of last year, resulting in 34 deaths. The mosquito-borne viral disease, primarily transmitted through the bites of *Aedes* and *Haemagogus* mosquitoes, has seen a troubling resurgence.

“The situation is most critical in Tolima, located in central-west Colombia, where 22 cases have been detected,” Jaramillo said during a press briefing.

Health authorities are ramping up vector control measures, vaccination campaigns, and public awareness efforts to contain the outbreak and prevent further spread. The declaration of a health emergency allows the government to mobilize resources more quickly and implement emergency health protocols in affected regions.



Maya Ali Pays Tribute to Pakistan Armed Forces, Calls for Peace After Operation Bunyan ul Marsus

By: News Desk

Renowned Pakistani actress Maya Ali shared an emotional message on Instagram in the wake of Pakistan's powerful military response to Indian aggression during Operation Bunyān Marsūs on May 10, 2025. Expressing immense pride in the bravery of the armed forces, she honored the sacrifices made by soldiers who defended the country with unwavering resolve.

In her message, Maya saluted the courage of Pakistan's troops and quoted a verse from the Holy Qur'an, describing May 10 as a day that will forever be etched in memory. She also reiterated her long-held belief that war is never the solution, voicing a heartfelt desire for lasting peace between the two nations.

Her tribute struck a chord with many, serving as both a powerful acknowledgment of the military's role and a call for unity and peace in the region. The events of that day, which included targeted strikes on key Indian airbases, ultimately led to a ceasefire agreement facilitated by U.S. mediation.



Salman Khan Faces Hindutva Backlash for Supporting **Ceasefire**, Receives Death Threats

By: News Desk

In an alarming reflection of rising intolerance in India, Bollywood superstar Salman Khan became the target of Hindutva extremists after he expressed support for the recent ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

The actor faced a torrent of online abuse and threats after posting a tweet thanking God for the truce. Hindutva trolls—allegedly emboldened by the current political climate—flooded social media with hostile comments and issued death threats, ultimately pressuring Salman Khan to delete his post.

This is not the first time that celebrities in India, especially Muslim figures or those voicing support for peace and inclusivity, have faced intimidation. Similar attacks have previously targeted actors like Swara Bhasker and others who criticized divisive policies or expressed empathy for marginalized communities.

The incident underscores growing concerns over freedom of expression in India, where even a message of peace can provoke violent reactions from extremist elements.



Sonakshi Sinha Criticizes **Indian Media** Amid Tensions Between India and Pakistan

By: News Desk

Amid the recent tensions between India and Pakistan, Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha has strongly criticized the Indian media for its irresponsible reporting and fear-mongering. The actress took to social media, slamming news channels for sensationalizing the situation and spreading panic.

Sonakshi Sinha stated, "Our news channels have become a joke. The exaggerated reporting and screaming voices are causing mental distress." She questioned the ongoing situation, urging the media to do their job properly and show only the truth. "Don't sensationalize the war and spread fear among the public," she added.

She also advised the public to rely only on credible news sources, emphasizing the importance of trusting only those platforms that can be trusted. "Stop watching this trash that these misguided news channels are showing," she urged.

In her post, Sonakshi Sinha also referenced the Ministry of Defence's advisory, warning both the media and the public to



refrain from live reporting of ongoing operations at the warfront. The Ministry highlighted that such reports could not only jeopardize the operations but also endanger the lives of soldiers. While many users praised Sonakshi Sinha for her boldness and honesty, others criticized her, even labeling her a traitor for her stance.

Fawad Khan's Film 'Abir Gulaal' Release Postponed Indefinitely Due to Tensions

By: News Desk

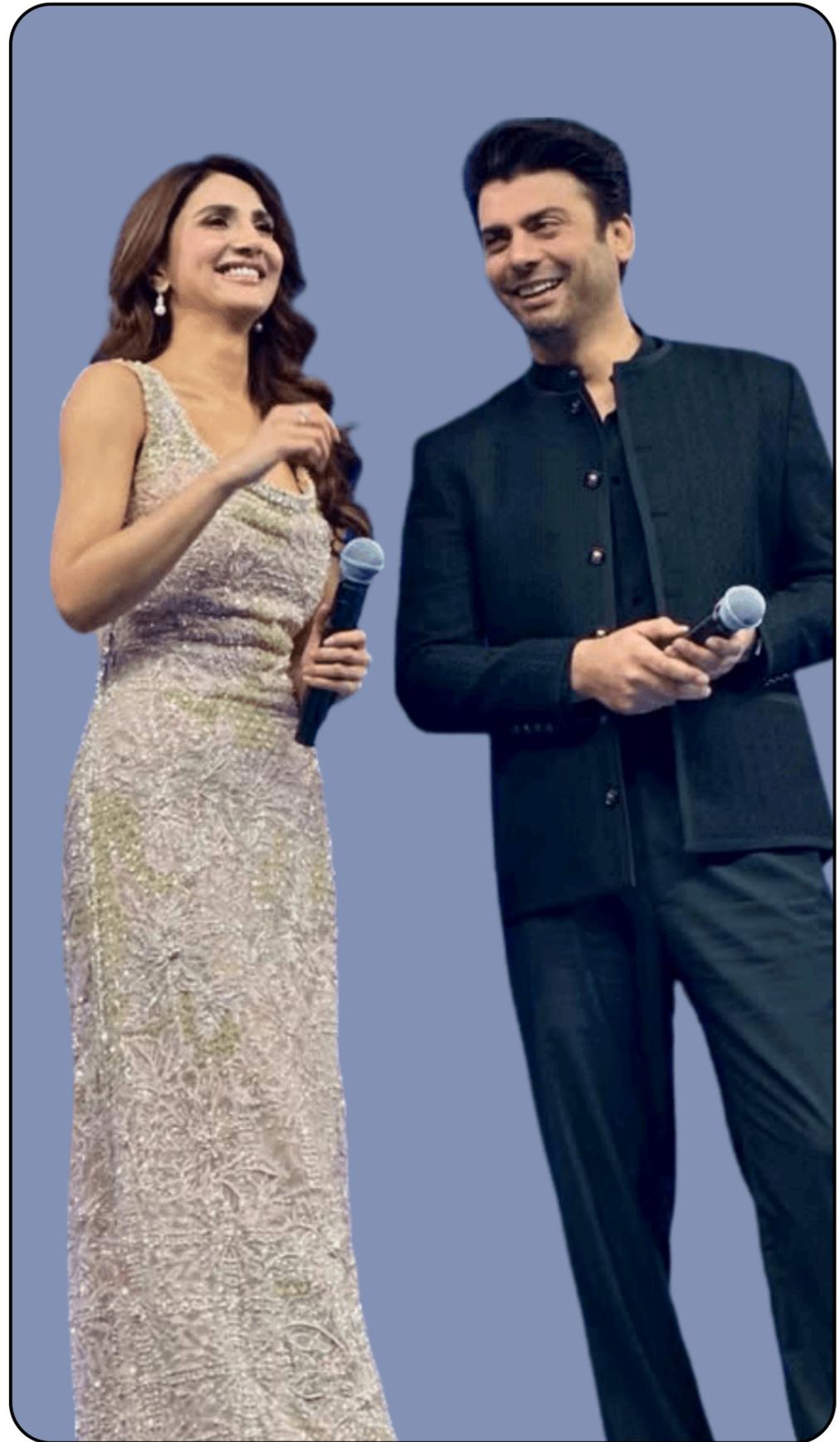
Pakistani actor Fawad Khan's much-anticipated film *Abir Gulaal*, co-starring Indian actress Vaani Kapoor, has had its release postponed indefinitely. The romantic film was initially scheduled for a worldwide release on May 9, including in India.

However, due to escalating tensions in the region following Indian aggression, the film's release has been delayed without a new release date. While the filmmakers and their team have not issued an official statement, the film's supporting actress has confirmed the postponement.

The future of *Abir Gulaal* remains uncertain, with many speculating that its release will now depend on the improvement of Pakistan-India relations. Last month, following the Pulwama attack, the Indian government had imposed a complete ban on the film.

Moreover, the film's teaser and popular songs such as "Rang Rasiya" and "Khudaya Ishq" were also removed from YouTube and other social media platforms. At that time, the Indian Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued a directive to all OTT platforms and digital media outlets, ordering them to immediately block any Pakistani content in the interest of national security.

Abir Gulaal marks Fawad Khan's first Bollywood film in nine years, with his last appearance in *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil* (2016). Fawad Khan has a large fan base in India, and many Bollywood actors had expressed support for his return to the Indian film industry.



Ali Zafar's Powerful Message Amid Tensions: "This Isn't a Movie — War Is Destruction"

By: News Desk

Pakistani singer and actor Ali Zafar has issued a strong and heartfelt statement amid the ongoing Pakistan-India tensions, calling for immediate dialogue between the two nations and urging global intervention to prevent further escalation.

In a series of social media posts, Ali Zafar revealed that he had just heard explosions near his home — a reference to the cross-border airstrikes in which Pakistani forces reportedly intercepted drones entering from across the border.

Criticizing the warmongering rhetoric on both sides, Zafar wrote, "Those beating the drums of war — do they even understand what war between two nuclear nations means? This isn't a film. War is destruction."

While reaffirming his complete trust in Pakistan's armed forces, Zafar warned that provocations that endanger innocent lives are deeply condemnable. He cautioned the world not to mistake Pakistan's desire for peace as a sign of weakness.

Calling on international organizations to take urgent action, he said, "Now is the time to talk, to listen, to resolve — before it's too late."

Ali Zafar's final line quickly went viral on social media, resonating with thousands:

"Every life is precious. Every nation has the right to safety. If there is Pakistan, there is us. Pakistan Zindabad!"

“

We just heard blasts from our home.

To those beating the drums of war, celebrating violence, provoking further conflict — do you truly understand what a war between two nuclear nations could mean?

This isn't a movie. War is devastation. Innocent lives — children, families — pay...

Ali Zafar (@AliZafarsays) May 8, 2025 —



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Profile Overview

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